

OWNER RESOURCE 01 / 05

What Is My Dog Telling Me?

Read the whole dog in context.

ABOUT CANINE UK

Canine UK starts with audit before assumptions. We look at the individual dog, their health, behaviour, environment and everyday life, alongside the needs and capabilities of their owner. Our approach puts safety, welfare, practical progress and owner understanding first.

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Notice change. Read the context. Review recovery.



Canine UK photo collection. Cover image is illustrative, not a behaviour diagnosis or technique demonstration.

What Is My Dog Telling Me?

Read the whole dog in context.

One sign does not prove what a dog feels or intends. Look at the whole body, the surroundings, what happened just before and how the dog recovers. Start with what is ordinary for this individual dog.

Know their ordinary

Notice movement, weight shift, body tension, breathing, mouth, eyes, ears and tail. Compare these with the dog's usual behaviour. Can they notice something and return their attention? Can they respond to familiar guidance and recover? Food or play is useful evidence only if they normally engage with it.

Respond to early changes

More scanning, tension, fixation, a slower response, faster movement or slower recovery can mean the setup needs changing. Add space, reduce distractions, choose a different route or shorten the exposure. Reassess the whole dog as the conditions change.

Put safety first

Freezing, fleeing, lunging, redirecting, panic or being unable to respond calls for safety before training. Leave safely and prevent further exposure. Follow your agreed management or emergency plan if you have one. A comfortable appearance is not a guarantee of safety.

Record the recovery

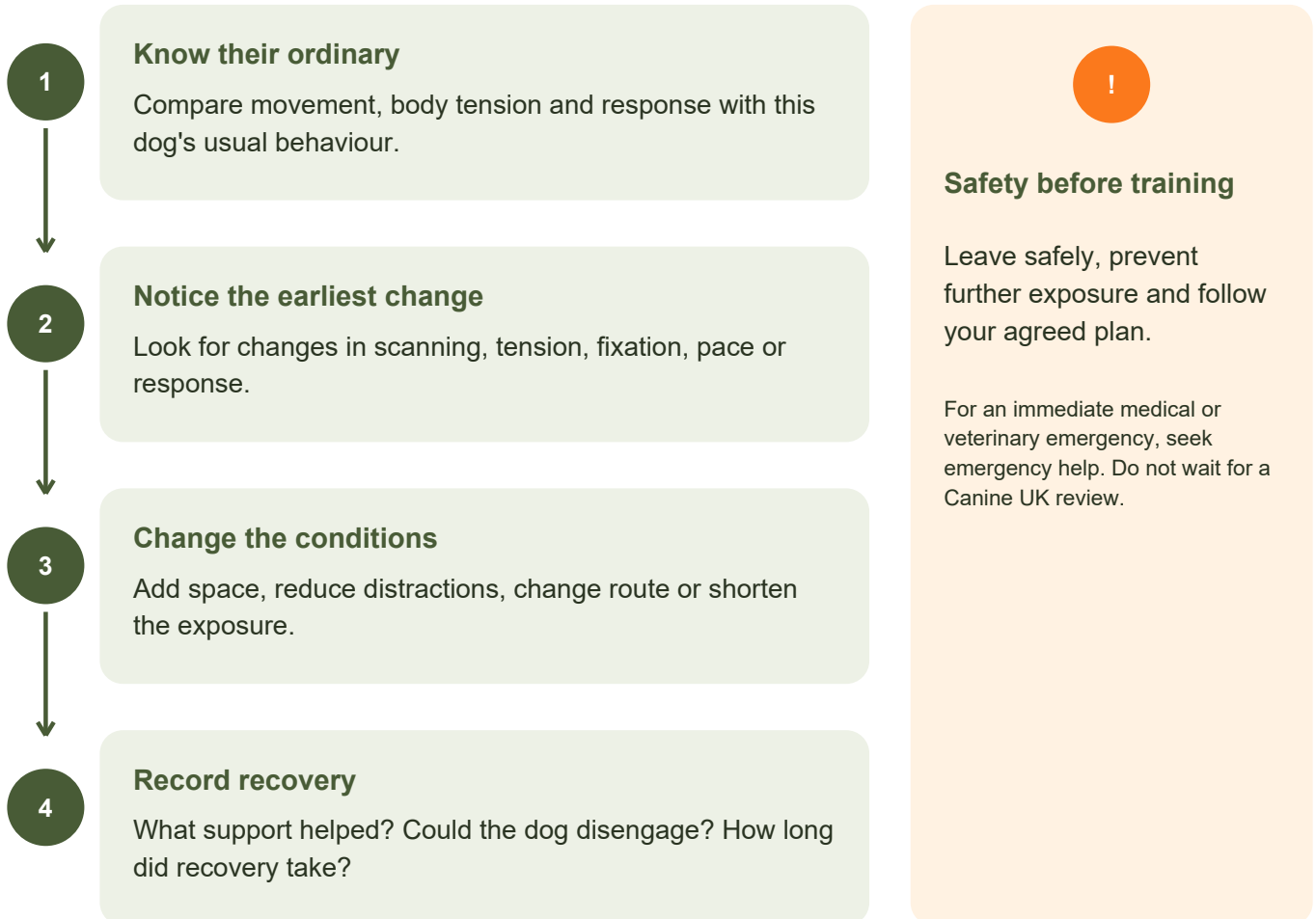
Record the earliest change, whether the dog could disengage, what support helped and how long recovery took. Stop the activity if the response is stronger than expected, recovery worsens, control is lost or you are unsure what you are seeing. Once everyone is safe, contact Canine UK for behavioural review.

Safety and support

Sudden change, possible pain, collapse, breathing difficulty, injury, prolonged panic or a bite injury requires appropriate professional, veterinary or emergency support. For an immediate medical or veterinary emergency, seek emergency help immediately. Do not wait for a Canine UK review.

Read the whole dog in context

An observation sequence, not a ladder of emotions. Safety can override it at any point.



Keep the context

One sign does not prove an emotion or intention. A comfortable appearance does not guarantee safety. Use the full guidance and safety boundaries on page 2.

My observation and recovery sheet

Record one situation and what you actually saw. Compare it with this dog's ordinary behaviour.

Date and situation: What was happening just before the change?

Ordinary behaviour: What is usual for this dog in a workable situation?

Earliest change: What changed in the body, movement or response?

Conditions: What could the dog see or hear? How close or intense was it?

My action: What did I change, and what happened next?

Recovery: Could the dog disengage? What support helped, and how long did it take?

Review: What would help me respond earlier next time?

Stop and seek support: What was stronger than expected, uncertain or outside our plan?

Need help with your own dog?

This resource is a starting point, not a substitute for an individual assessment.

A Canine UK audit helps us understand your dog, your concerns and your circumstances before recommending an appropriate pathway.

Request an audit

ask@canineuk.com

canineuk.com/contact-us/