

## Ever felt so much pressure that you couldn't relax? Welcome to the world of hyperactivity

### The cause of the problem:

Imagine the scenario... a friend invites you and a few friends round for a bit of a get together and whilst everyone else is relaxing the host is running back and forth like a busy bee offering everyone drinks and more food. Even though everyone has explained that they are full and have had plenty to drink the host keeps finding more work to do rather than relaxing. One minute they are collecting plates and washing them up, then they are wiping down surfaces and sweeping the kitchen floor (which is spotless!)

Finally somebody shouts out "Will you come and sit down and relax!"

You see this host is feeling that with all these people around they can't relax and switch off.

In fact they need to keep busy, and so it is with your dog.

The big difference is that they don't need to have visitors come round they will be like that when it is only you in the room!

### Symptoms can include:

Simply never switching off is a classic sign, many dogs that I go to visit seem to have switched off and yet they still have one ear up and half an eye open. They often have invaded their owners space whilst they sleep and so as soon as the owner moves they awake and can get back on the job of following them around!

**Any job that the dog takes upon itself can be a symptom. Remember the host who couldn't settle (the floor didn't need sweeping but it was a classic sign that they couldn't relax!)**

### Common signs of a dog that can't switch off are:

- Continual space invading
- Continual attention seeking
- Following you around 24/7
- On the go 24/7 doing anything
- Excessive digging
- Excessive chewing
- Fence running
- Protective duties, barking at noises

### Other more bizarre but not uncommon symptoms can include:

- Chasing flies
- Chasing lights and reflections
- Chasing shadows
- Chasing birds
- Chasing their tail
- Excessive licking
- Self-mutilation i.e chewing themselves

## The solution:

The solution is straightforward, treat the cause of the problems. Show your dog that you are the **pack leader** and the symptoms will disappear. The way to do that is:

- **Become the pack leader** – put into place the **5 Golden Rules**
- **Make sure that you do Golden rule no.3 perfectly** – You must get your dog to relax before you start the stop clock and wait for another 5 minutes at least before calling them to give them attention! This is the key. If necessary you can practice rule no.3 lots of times (mini leaves) so that your dog learns to calm down quicker and quicker!
- **Golden rule no.4** – Try not to keep speaking to them, calling them and patting your dog as you turn them ON when you do this. Remember your real aim is to turn them OFF so when they actually relax ignore them and give them a break, the longer, the better!

## Other considerations:

- **Make sure that you dog has a clear area to settle** – Whether it is a blanket or a bed a dog is far more likely to relax if they have a clear place to settle. It needs to be near you so you may need to move it around or put one in each of the main rooms
- **Exercise** – If your dog has a lot of energy then look to exercise them properly and see if a good run helps the situation and they are calmer after wards

*Q & A*

**Q: Why is my dog stressed – I don't understand?**

*A: It is hard to understand but to a dog this is a very odd world, there is so much going on around them that they simply do not understand. The telephone, the TV, visitors, strangers...these are all things that can get them stressed and they struggle to switch off. Very often it simply becomes too much for them and they end up winding up and becoming more and more tense and switched on. After a while it simply becomes permanent and they never switch off. It is often mistaken for high energy but this is very different this is stress and given the right messages they will switch off and sleep!*

**Q: Why does becoming the pack leader help my dog switch off?**

*A: Think of it like this. If you are driving with friends somewhere and you are the driver or map reader then you have a certain degree of responsibility. However if you are in the back and are just being driven there then you can relax and enjoy the ride! It is the same for the dog, once they know that they are not the pack leader their whole life turns around and they can relax! There is far more pressure at the top of an organisation because there is more responsibility, just look at the typical manager, you rarely find them lying around looking for something to do!*