

# ENGAGE, DISENGAGE

**Who is it for?** Pet parents with reactive dogs!

**What is it?** It is a game and training technique you can use to distract your dog from their trigger (other dogs, strangers, squirrels, cars, etc.), and get them to focus on you instead.

**When?** Practice 5 minutes each day, and when in the presence of the trigger.

**Where?** A safe distance away from the trigger. As your dog improves, you can slowly get closer over time.

**Why?** Because reactivity can be frustrating for both the pet parent and the pet! Building a more positive association with the trigger (by getting yummy treats for ignoring it) should improve the behavior over time.

**How?**

1. Make sure you have lots of high value treats (i.e. cheese, cut-up hot dogs, or boiled chicken).
2. To start, stand a safe distance from the trigger. If your dog is barking and lunging a lot, you need to get farther away.
3. Get your dog to engage with the trigger by looking at it. You may need to point.
4. Mark "yes" or click when they engage, and then give your dog a treat.
5. Practice this a few times.
6. Get your dog to engage again, but this time, do not mark and treat when they look at the object. Instead, wait until they disengage and look back at you. You may need to make a noise or call their name to get them to redirect to you.
7. Mark with a "yes" or click when they disengage with the trigger and look back at you. Then give your dog a treat.
8. Practice, practice, practice!

