

HOW TO HANDLE A DOG FIGHT

Dog fights can and often do happen. They can range from a quick squabble, to dogs latching onto another dog, or two or more dogs in a long lasting, escalating fight. Although there is no standard for breaking up a dog fight, below is a list of options for what to do if you witness a dog fight and need to break it up.

Do not put yourself, your hands or any part of your body in the middle of a dog fight! Many of the worst bites are sustained by putting hands into fights.

The first thing to do is try a sudden aversive, such as a loud noise near the dogs to startle them and try to end the fighting. Things you can use to make a loud noise:

- Shaker can
- Air horn
- Whistle
- Keys that you can throw at a hard surface
- Steel dishes or something similar that you can bang together
- Banging a wall, or door, or anything to make a loud noise

Make your loud noise and cease the instant the dogs disengage. (Try for only a few seconds and if it does not work, move on).

If the loud noise does not work use a spray such as water, (or toss water from a bowl or use a hose) citronella or pepper. You can also try throwing a jacket or blanket over the dogs.

If the fight is still occurring, the most experienced person/people will each pull the dog(s) off as follows:

1. Grip the base of the tail where it joins the body (if the dog has no tail, grasp the dog's rear legs close to the dog's groin to pull him off – never pull a dog off by grasping under the dog's knee joint).
2. Pull both dogs simultaneously quickly out and up, raising the rear quarters off the ground.
3. Once the dogs are separated, secure both dogs with leashes and assess for damage.

Ensure that if there are other dogs present that are not involved in the fight, that other people are securing them.

If a dog has latched onto another dog and has not responded to the loud noise, being pulled apart or sprayed, you will need to try to open his mouth. The best option would be to force a stick across the back of the dog's mouth to attempt to pry it open.

The very last resort to consider would be pulling the dogs out by their collars or necks – *be aware there is the risk of an accidental or redirected bite.*

If you are ever in the situation where you are alone and need to break up a dog fight, first try noise, then a spray. If you do not have anything to make noise with, try to pull the more intense fighter off. If you are unsure of who is more intense, try to pull the dog off who is less likely to be controlled through use of your voice. If one of your dogs is involved, this usually means pulling the other dog off.