

# RESISTANCE TO HANDLING

## NEED MORE HELP?

Find additional resources at  
[pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).

Some dogs are uncomfortable being touched on certain parts of their body. Common places where dogs do not like to be touched include feet, tail, hind end and mouth. These behaviors may appear when brushing your dog, wiping their feet, or petting them in certain places. Dogs who do not like to be handled may show behavior such as growling, showing teeth, snapping, or even biting. Follow these guidelines to help your dog become more comfortable with being handled.

- Make a list of anything you need to do with your dog that may require some handling. This may include brushing, wiping their feet, or cleaning their ears.
- Start with the activity the dog is MOST comfortable with.
  - Begin making positive associations with this activity by offering treats during very short moments of handling.
  - For example, if the activity is wiping feet, start by touching the dog's paw with a towel, then reward them with a treat.
  - Then touch two of the dog's paws with a towel and give a treat.
  - Graduate to lifting the dog's paw, then giving a treat.
  - Slowly increase the time and amount of handling as the dog becomes more comfortable.
- If the dog shows discomfort, such as moving away, becoming stiff, or growling, immediately stop handling and back away to let the dog calm down. When you return to handling, take it a little slower next time.
- Reward with treats even when handling in low-stress situations, such as petting.
- Always work to create a positive association with all forms of touch.

If you need more assistance, reach out to a positive reinforcement trainer and explain your dog's behaviors so they can continue to help with training.

**We are always here to help! You can find additional behavior and training resources at [pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).**

*Adapted from Northeast Animal Shelter*



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