

Rattlesnake Avoidance Training

From Erick Briggs - Natural Solutions - 760.464.6792

Rattlesnake avoidance training dogs has been proven to be safe and effective in helping to prevent an envenomation by a rattlesnake. Erick Briggs personally trains every dog to recognize and avoid the sight, sound and scent of a rattlesnake. Erick has been training animals, and working with venomous animals for over ten years. His experience and sensitivity to the animals allows both the dogs and the snakes to be humanely treated during the training process. The snakes used during the training are muzzled to ensure the safety of the dogs and the handler. The success of our program is a uniquely designed process of rattlesnake avoidance training consisting of several phases:

FIRST PHASE Smell Recognition

The handler will take an object that has the sent of the specific rattlesnake species in your area, and introduce it to your dog several times. After your dog shows interest in the scent, a low level stimulation will be applied. This teaches your dog to avoid the specific smell of a rattlesnake in your area. After your dog learns avoidance behavior, he/she will proceed to the next phase.

SECOND PHASE Sound Recognition

The handler will bring your dog to a "blind box" (a box where the snake can see the dog, yet the dog is unable to see the snake) multiple times and from different angles. A low level stimulus is applied each time your dog acknowledges the rattle sound of a live rattlesnake. This teaches the dog to recognize and avoid the sound of a rattlesnake. Once your dog learns avoidance behavior, he/she will advance to the next phase.

THIRD PHASE Putting it all together

The handler will introduce your dog to a live muzzled rattlesnake multiple times form multiple angles. The dog has the ability to see, hear, and smell the rattlesnake. This is where the animal can put all three together and truly understand what a rattlesnake is. When your dog exhibits consistent avoidance behavior, you will next be asked to call your dog from across the snake at a distance. The dog will make a noticeable arch to avoid proximity to the snake, grab the leash or collar as your dog comes to you.

FOURTH PHASE Small and silent

In the final stage your dog will be introduced to a muzzled baby rattlesnake. Babies are small and non-threatening and unable to rattle, but still smell like a rattlesnake. As your dog shows interest in the baby rattlesnake a low level stimulation will again be applied. This teaches your dog that small and silent is still harmful.

During the training, please pay attention to:

- 1- What the trainer says, so we all (including animals) can be safe.
- 2- Your dogs body language (this will later alert you if a rattlesnake is near).
- 3- Any structure designated to create a safety barrier. This is the closest you can safely get to the snake.

Yearly training is recommended to strengthen your dog's rattlesnake awareness.