

TELLINGTON T TOUCH PRACTITIONER TRAINING – CASE STUDY #3

Dog: Biscuit

Breed: Cockapoo (spayed female)

Age: 6

History: Biscuit was a stray in Mexico, then brought to California through rescue. From California, she was transferred to Canada. Once adopted, they discovered that she had sustained fractures to both hips (that may never fully recover) requiring surgery, is blind in one eye and needed a portion of her foot removed. She has been with the adopter for 3 years, attends the daycare and plays very well with other dogs there.

Physical Limitations: jumping

Primary Concern: intense barking and reactivity on leash walks

FIRST VISIT

FREWORK:

FIDGET: a lot of jumping and crying at mom/dad. Tail wag extremely fast. Once they started walking around, she followed and gradually started to settle down and spend time exploring the items and eating the treats. She seemed to enjoy exploring but would check in for where mom/dad were. Tail did full circles sometimes.

Observed limp, and shorter back left leg (due to partial removal of paw), tense through the spine. (See Video 1)

LEASH/HARNESS:

Typically walked on back clip harness. She was often braced forward. Introduced TTouch leash/handle paired with their harness, for cost effectiveness for them as it had two clips.

GROUNDWORK SUMMARY:

*Asked parents each to walk Biscuit through the ground poles etc as they would normally walk. There was a lot of pulling, veering off to the side, zig zagging behind the back etc. Fidget: barking, jumping up at them and chewing on leash (See Video 2)

*Then I gave them some ideas about how to use the leash gently and with sensitivity to help her stay balanced and follow parents. Once she was more balanced on the double leash, and the parents were more intentional, she improved considerably.

*Would like to work towards her paying attention to what is closer at hand (i.e. items on the floor), coordinating herself moving through the elements and paying attention to mom/dad's body language.

TTOUCH (See photos below)

*I started with a light **Noah's March**, then **Clouded Leopard** around the body. Frequent pauses, breathing, dog stayed close by. Once, she ran to mom and then returned. I did some **Ear TTouch** and then some more **Clouded Leopard**. Found sensitivity as I approached the hind end/hip. Mom said she always flinches in that area due to injury. I moved to the shoulder and down the front leg. Parents noticed her eyes starting to close and were surprised by her calmness.

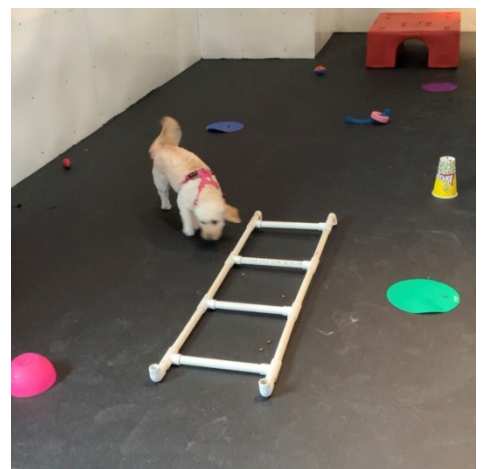
*After a short break, I coached mom through the novel nature of TTouch. She tried the **Zebra** and **Ear TTouch**. The dog moved in closer to her and on one pause, laid on her back (seemingly happily) wanting more. I encouraged mom to continue with handling the extremities; bending the ankle and light circles on the legs. Then she did **Llama** down the back and tail to finish. Right after, Biscuit gave a big yawn.

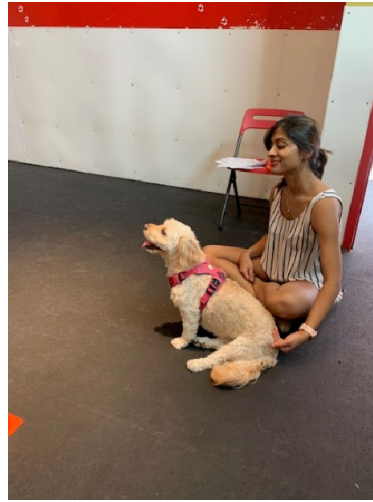
*Dad acknowledged that it's easy to follow Biscuit down her path of anxiety and as he tries to settle her, often pets her quickly and brusquely which he said often keeps her revved. He seemed very keen to try this new way at home and on their walks.

PHYSICAL BALANCE: years of compensating for injuries and pulling on the leash will have developed parts of the body in a different way than what being balanced will do. I suggested that she "may" be working different muscles when in balance.

MOVING FORWARD: Will meet next week.

They will practice using the double leash, with the melt and soft guidance. Will try keeping her on one side. Will not pay attention to the fidget and will ignore and/or rather redirect to a more productive/calm behaviour. Rather than scruffy touch, will try to slow down, try the light circles, and slides. Watch hip area for discomfort as new muscles may be used.





SECOND VISIT

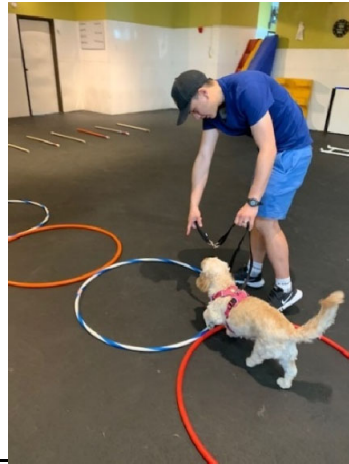
UPDATE: Parents were diligent about practicing this week and embraced the notion that a more balanced, mannerly Biscuit, will ultimately be a healthier, happier Biscuit. Dad walked Biscuit in the mornings and Mom and Dad walked together each evening, finding areas with less distraction to build up a new, successful normal. They gave her moments to pause, used Ttouch circles on her head, Zebra and slides down her ears. They allowed her to look at the world and then redirect her attention back to them. They had sent a message part way through the week saying, “We’ve made more progress in the past two days than in the entire last year”.

FREWORK:

This week there was no “fidget” even remotely close to the last week. She barked a couple times, but ran around (joyfully), exploring the items on the ground and finding some treats. She did not cling to mom and dad or try to jump up on their legs like last week. Important to note that they had stopped

GROUNDWORK:

For novelty, balance and interest, they walked through 4 ground activity stations both directions. Mom, in particular, made huge improvements in not letting Biscuit just pull her around the room. She used her body and her voice to guide Biscuit, and the tension previously seen in Biscuit’s body faded away. Much of the work was done on a loose leash! Biscuit often looked up at them, instead of her previous lunging and seem to get comfort from the holding her to better manners and giving something interesting for them to do together.



USING THE GROUNDWORK TO INTRODUCE A DOG

As she gained familiarity and confidence moving through the elements/groundwork, we used that to introduce my dog, Daisy into the room. I laid Daisy in a corner, and Biscuit worked through various emotions. Our goal is to show her that she doesn't need to bark so much/protect anyone, for her to start regulating her impulses, to keep her in a calm, thinking mind so she doesn't just "react". Mom and Dad tried talking calmly, using the equipment, changing direction, deep breaths and Ttouch. She was able to make some definite progress and realize maybe all that barking wasn't required. See video 5

INSIGHTS:

Dad mentioned that for years, they were supposed to be working to rehab her hind leg but because she typically moves so quickly, she keeps the leg held up at that pace and therefore have been unable to make headway. Since starting our training, she is balancing herself better, moving more intentionally and they have noticed her setting that back leg down frequently. (P.S. This made me ecstatic!)

To me, she is exemplifying the Ttouch philosophy of "change the position, change the behaviour".

MOVING FORWARD: we will meet next week. Explore some different touches....see what she responds to , keeping in mind her sensitive spots

Parents will continue to practice and build confidence in appropriate settings. Encouraged them to experiment with different light touches and follow their instinct.

THIRD VISIT

Update: neighbours have commented that they have noticed a positive change in Biscuit's behaviour.

Dad has continued the morning walks and together they do evening walks. They feel that she is benefitting from increased structure/predictability in her life and are thrilled that she is starting to use that injured hind leg so much more.

Observations:

Much more settled and curious during freework. Less tension in back and using both back legs. Only bit leash once or twice as opposed to earlier visits where it was her frequent “fidget”. The Ttouch leash/handle has provided her with the balance to be able to use all four legs. It was the first time (according to parents) that she was able to be on leash in the presence of another dog and not bark.

Ttouch to address injuries/compensation/tension

Tried new TTouches on humans first, then Biscuit.

Thought to try the **Tail TTouch** for gait, and some **Inchworm** on back to address hunched tension, **Mouth TTouch** (she’s been an excessive barker and it likely is taking a lot of restraint for her to bark less).

Mouth TTouch: tried the **Owl** on the jaw. Biscuit had the choice to stay or go or move....she stayed, moved into the touch and lowered her head when this was done.

Inchworm: this was very well received. Parents were particularly surprised how they could feel such slight movements on themselves .

Tail TTouch: Moved hand under tail from base to tip and then small circles with the base of the tail

Biscuit’s response: Mom paused frequently, and it was fascinating to watch Biscuit yawn, adjust her position and move in closer to Mom, at times seeming to offer parts of her body for touch.



