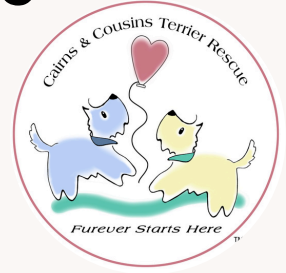


Cairns & Cousins Terrier Rescue

Monthly Newsletter

**DEDICATED TO RESCUING CAIRN TERRIERS AND
OTHER SMALL STATURE TERRIER COUSINS**



Terrier Talk

It's fall! As the leaves start to change, the temperatures drop, and the daylight hours disappear, what remains is the continued need for rescue as escalating veterinary and daily living costs result in many giving up their pets. CCTR continues to take in the cairns and cousins that need our help, regardless of their age or medical needs. Once here, these dogs still need to find their forever homes. This issue will feature beautiful little Leila, being fostered in PA. Leila is a ball of energy and love and you will enjoy reading more about her. You can help Leila and others find their forever homes by sharing our website at ccterrierrescue.org with anyone looking for a small terrier to bring joy into their lives.

This issue also is dedicated to dealing with terrier behavior and how to be successful when encountering some of the challenges that may occur with dog ownership. Understanding your dog is important in helping them adjust to a new living situation. We know you will find the information in this issue not only informative but practical.



Liz Romick

President, Cairns & Cousins Terrier Rescue



Helping reactive dogs cope with fears, frustrations

By Elissa Orlando

Imagine you're walking down a street in a strange city. You don't speak the language and you don't know your way around. You want to enjoy the scenery and take in the neighborhood, but you're on edge. You hear a sound, and you jump. A stranger suddenly appears, and you tense up until they've walked past. If that same person reaches for you or puts a hand on your shoulder, you might tell them to back off, call for help or run away.

Dogs also react to their surroundings. Some dogs have trouble handling the sights, sounds, people and other dogs around them. This is called reactivity. Reactive dogs have an over-the-top response to something they hear or see in the world. They might bark, lunge or pull. They might snap or jump around on the leash, twisting and turning until you are wrapped up in it.

There is no evidence to support the idea that rescue dogs are more reactive than other dogs. However, rescue dogs often experience several transitions in their environments. As a dog settles into a new home, fears and reactions that weren't apparent at first may begin to surface.

There is no question that reactivity is showy — often loud, intense and embarrassing for the dog's handler or guardian. For this reason, reactivity is sometimes labeled "aggression." But before addressing the behavior, it's important to understand what the dog is experiencing. When dogs react, especially on leash, they are usually overexcited either because they are frustrated, or they are afraid.

Empathy, patience help reactive dogs cope with fears



Is This Dog Upset?

Before we address reactivity, we always ask one question: “Is this dog upset?” It’s an important distinction when deciding how to help a reactive dog. Sometimes, dogs simply want access to another dog or person and display intense behaviors because they are frustrated that they can’t get closer. Sandra L., CCTR’s director of foster homes, describes one terrier in CCTR who does just that. He growls, snaps, lunges and barks while on leash. But in his foster home, he does fine with the resident dog. In his case, the leash may be creating frustration by preventing him from getting where he wants to go. But in many cases, the dog is upset and afraid of the trigger. In these cases, it’s critical to support the dog and help them cope with fear rather than simply trying to stop the behavior. Addressing reactivity almost always involves a multipronged approach. There are four important steps to addressing and reducing reactivity:

1. Compassion

If your dog is reactive, the first thing to keep in mind is empathy. When a dog is displaying on leash, empathy can be difficult. The behavior may be loud, and it can be embarrassing and frustrating when you feel like you can’t get control of the situation. Those feelings are completely understandable. But try to see the situation from your dog’s perspective. The dog is stressed by the trigger and struggling to cope with big emotions. We call this being “over threshold.” When this happens, remember that your dog doesn’t like this any more than you do. He/she isn’t giving you a hard time — he/she is having a hard time. The dog needs your help.

2. Prevention

Every time a dog has a reactive episode, he/she rehearses the very behaviors we are trying to reduce. Preventing or minimizing these flare-ups is an important part of helping a reactive dog. There are several ways to do this:

- Walk during quiet times. Choose times of day when you are less likely to encounter people, traffic and other dogs.
- Reduce the pressure of walks. Walk your dog for potty breaks but use other activities for health and exercise. Fetch, tug, safe chew toys, trick training and puzzle toys can all provide valuable physical and mental stimulation.
- Be your dog’s advocate. Don’t be afraid to tell people not to approach your dog. Put up your hand to prevent someone from coming closer with their dog. You also can wear a shirt or other visible indicator letting people know that your dog is fearful or in training.

Prevention is about giving your dog fewer opportunities to practice unwanted behaviors while you work on teaching him/her new ways to respond.

3. Training

Teaching alternative behaviors can be helpful – both for dogs who are barrier-frustrated and dogs who are fearful. You can teach behaviors that help your dog disengage from a trigger and move away from it. When providing this training, it’s important to work at a distance from the trigger that keeps your dog comfortable – in other words, under threshold.

However, when a dog is afraid of a particular trigger, we often use desensitization and counterconditioning to change the response to that scary thing. We expose the dog to the trigger at a comfortable distance and pair it with something wonderful, such as a high-value food reward. This kind of training takes consistency and patience. Most importantly, it is critical to keep the dog under threshold and at a safe distance from the scary thing. If the dog is overwhelmed, he/she is unlikely to be able to learn.

Over time, with careful and consistent training, a fearful dog’s response to the scary thing can change. They may be able to get closer to their triggers with less fear. At that point, it may be easier to teach alternative behaviors that allow them to disengage from the trigger and move away. But the big win is that your dog may be able to live with less fear.

Whether a reactive dog is frustrated, excited or fearful, addressing the behavior and helping the dog cope is job one – especially for rescue dogs who may be experiencing changing environments. Empathy, patience and ongoing support and training will help any reactive dog feel less stressed about their world.

Positive reinforcement training helps rescues adjust to new homes

By Jane Campbell

Small terriers, with their smiling faces and unlimited energy, can be wonderful family members, *if* you are prepared to give them the time and attention they need to settle into your family. The correct training is essential to accomplishing this.

At Cairns & Cousins Terrier Rescue, we work with many dogs from varied and frequently challenging backgrounds. Rescue dogs are just that. Rescued. We often don't know much about their backgrounds. Our experience has reinforced our conviction that the best approach to training our rescued terriers and their cousins is through positive reinforcement training. The very nature of our terriers ensures that they respond with enthusiasm to a positive reinforcement, reward-based training program. This is the only training technique CCTR uses and recommends.

Sandra L., CCTR's director of foster homes, says that when dogs first come into our rescue this form of training is very successful in helping them become accustomed to their new environment.

Positive reinforcement training is a science-based, humane approach to dog handling. This type of training encourages you to appreciate the dog's point of view and recognize what they need. What frightens them? What interests them? What do they need to succeed? What is the dog's heritage and what are its genetic imperatives? When you understand your dog's basic hereditary tendencies you are in a much stronger position to meet that dog's needs. In this case, working with the dog through positive reinforcement while managing negative behavior becomes a winning proposition. Essentially this means rewarding your dog for doing what you ask it to do. The treat must be given immediately so the dog connects the action with the reward. Using repetitive words and gestures when you use this training helps reinforce the new skill or behavior. If the dog does not respond with the right skill or behavior on the first try, they are guided to the correct behavior and given another opportunity to earn the treat.

This training works with a variety of dog personalities and behavioral challenges. Most dogs want to fit in with their new "pack." However, now and then you meet a dog with more personality than sense or with issues such as anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder or reactivity. Frequently dogs with these issues also have a triggering health issue such as allergies or gastric problems, so it is a good idea to have your vet check them. These dogs are particularly receptive to the positive training experience.

My own highly reactive little cairn boy, who is prone to pancreatitis, has made huge progress using this positive approach to training. Where he was once either frightened or angry in a new situation and capable of attacking, he now will turn to me for security and, when he calms himself and sits nicely, a treat. We aren't perfect but the difference from where we began is night and day.

Sandra L. said CCTR encourages our adopters to use positive training when bringing a new dog into their family.

Providing the dog with an exercise pen in a public area of the home is the best way to integrate a new dog. This gives the new dog time to decompress, become comfortable with the family and their routine, and observe the other dogs without being expected to interact with them immediately. It also gives the adopting family time to observe the dog and its responses to them and their other pets.

The exercise pen, if space is available, works with many dogs and especially those who resource guard their crate or hate a crate. It's also better for house training an adult dog.

Ultimately, training your dog comes down to five principles:

1. Timing is everything.
2. Consistency is key.
3. Clear communication.
4. Varied rewards.
5. Patience and persistence.



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Positive reinforcement training helps rescues in new homes

If you choose to work with a trainer to assist you in helping your new terrier become a happy and manageable member of your family, you should research and interview trainers who work within the parameters of positive reinforcement training.

These little terriers make wonderful additions to the right home and the right dog people. With the appropriate training, you will have an active, curious and affectionate new family member who will give you adventures and love to add spice to your family life.



Terrier of the Month

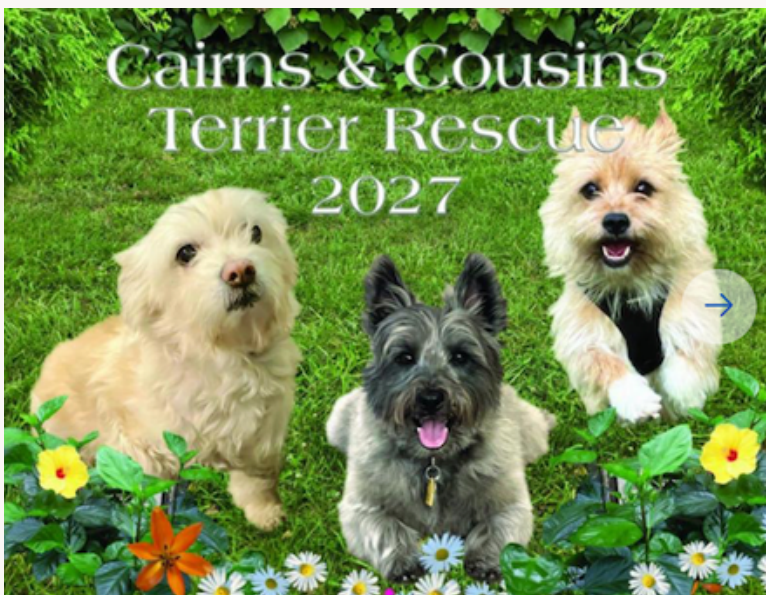
Cairns & Cousins Terrier Rescue has many cairns, cousin breeds and mixes who are waiting for their forever homes. One of the mixes is an adorable, active young pup who is being fostered in Pennsylvania.



Her foster mom, PK, says: Leila is 19 months old, and still very much a puppy! She loves to play with willing dogs, but is a bit snippy with older dogs that won't play with her. She gets into a bit of mischief when she is bored – hunting out things to chew or shred such as paper, dropped pens, interesting things from the coffee table. She loves to be cuddled, and will give anyone her belly if they correct her for doing that sort of thing.

Leila is a Yorkie/Boston Terrier mix, and is the Boston Terrier color known as Seal (black with a bit of brown when in the sun). She has the classic Boston Terrier head shape (round with a short muzzle) and white markings. Very bouncy when she first arrived, but has since learned to calm herself, and not to nibble on human hands.

Anyone with the energy to love a delicate puppy will enjoy helping Leila learn to be the best dog in the world.



Announcing the first CCTR Annual Calendar featuring our adopted dogs from opening day (July 2025) through the end of July 2026. Pre-orders are being taken through Oct. 31, 2026, on our website (link below or you can find it in the menu under Help Us).

A limited run is planned, so don't put off ordering and arrange to get yours as soon as you finish reading your newsletter!

Order [here](#)



So many ways to help!



Also coming this month, CCTR's first Howl'O'ween store featuring hand-crafted decor items with a Halloween or autumn vibe. All feature cairns (or cousins) and we will be announcing the launch at the end of September. Watch for the announcement on social media platforms.



One of our favorite, returning partners has been launched. Sarris Candies will have Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas goodies that make great gifts and are just as yummy as a treat for you. If our sales are over \$2,500 this holiday season, we will get a 27% profit - that extra 2% can make a difference for all the Cairns & Cousins. You can buy now or bookmark the page for future ordering.

Click [here](#) to order your [Sarris Candies](#) treats!

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