



Harry

My client got Harry, a 16 year old Tibetan Terrier about 15 months ago. He has 3 legs, can only see dark shapes and is probably a bit hard of hearing, but is a very determined little dog. The owner was struggling with Harry whenever another dog came near him. He was very barky and a bit reactive, but this was probably due to the sight impairment. At home is very lovable and happy and has negotiated his way around his new home and settled very quickly.

A dog of this age and health is not going to be able to change his behaviour easily; however I showed his owner how to distract Harry with chicken whenever another dog was in sight. We would take Harry off to one side, preferably with his back to the approaching dog and then feed him bits of chicken. If we held onto the treat really tightly he had to really concentrate and nibble at it, so this took his attention away from the other dog and gave the other dog time to pass.

This really worked well and gave the owner some much needed calm on their walks together. The reason that I have added Harry as a case study for you to read is that it is not always about modifying the behaviour, but being able to give the dog and owner tools to take them out of a potential situation. It's also about confidence building; no one wants to be the owner with a reactive dog, so distraction is a really good way of getting the dog to focus on the owner and probably get a good treat or it's favourite toy out of it as a reward for good behaviour.

It's been lovely working with Harry, such a determined dog to live life normally and has brought a great deal of companionship to his owner.