

STRESS IN DOGS

- Dogs can stress either high (zoomies) or low (freeze, sniff, stop working)
- If a dog is exhibiting stress signs (see below), depending on the severity of the stress he may not be able to respond to your cues or you in general. If this happens you need to lower the outside stimulus that caused your dog to stress (in other words, lower the distraction level or difficulty level, or whatever it was that caused the stress to escalate). Then you can give the dog a jackpot for working through the lower level stress. Eventually you can build back up the original stressors.

STRESS SIGNS

- sniffing
- yawning
- moving slowly around course
- ears back
- open mouth, panting
- averting eyes
- tail tucked/down
- sweaty paws
- zoomies (inattention, avoidance)
- avoidance; wandering around and not hearing or paying attention to you
- lip licking
- going around obstacles, particularly hard ones for the dog
- no stay at start line (slinks towards you or starts walking towards you or away from you)
- increased frequency of urination or defecation
- shivering (when dog isn't cold)
- excessive self-grooming
- scratching
- excessive shedding

DOG-INITIATED STRESS RELIEVERS

- shaking (like when a dog is wet); the dog seems to shake the stress off!
- stretching and/or play bow; this stretches out tensed up muscles due to stress