



Rutland Dog Training

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## **Charging at the Dangerous Dogs Act by Adam Beral**

*I have a very large extremely friendly Alsatian - the problem I have is that he runs and jumps the fence to get to any other dog that goes along the lane at the bottom of my garden - he only wants to play with them and has no aggression in him whatsoever but it is a formidable sight for the owners seeing him charging down the garden. What can you suggest to help me stop this behaviour?*

Thank you for taking the time to write in. I must start with a word of caution. As you point out, you know that your dog is only being friendly, but the people walking by do not! Unfortunately this could land you in breach of the Dangerous Dogs Act, which states that a dog is dangerously out of control if "there are grounds for reasonable apprehension that it will injure any person, whether or not it actually does so". This very ambiguous piece of legislation puts the interpretation of his behaviour in the hands of the member of the public walking by your garden.

Further, your dog may want nothing more than to play but the dog he is running towards may not! There are many dogs around who are aggressive towards other dogs, and I would hate for your Alsatian to get attacked for want of a higher fence!

As for training, the crux of the problem lies in a lack of obedience training, particularly when there is strong distraction! I would start by going back to basics with heelwork and recall training when there are no distractions. Keep the training sessions light hearted and enjoyable, calling him to you on a long lead for a treat and a game. Never underestimate the value of a dog training class – even for the older or more obedient dog.

Once you are confident that he is responding consistently without any distractions, it is then time to increase the challenge. Set him up when you are in your garden practicing your heelwork on the lead by getting a friend to walk their dog quietly down the lane. He will undoubtedly become distracted but if you are confident he knows the exercises, you should be able to keep his attention with a treat and praise him when he is working with you and not fixating on the other dog. Increase the level of distraction very gradually.



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The choice needs to be very clear to him that charging down the garden does not get him anywhere but staying with you results in a good game. The only way that you can get him out of the habit totally is to prevent him from doing it, and the only way to achieve that is to keep him on the lead during training. As with all learned behaviours, there is no quick fix and perseverance is the key to success!

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