

# TRIGGER

# STACKING

Trigger stacking is when your dog sees too many scary things in short succession. When this happens, your dog goes over threshold, and as a result shows exaggerated responses to stress. Over threshold is when your dog is showing apparent signs of stress, this can be heavy panting, avoidance, shaking, barking, growling or lunging. Each of these scary things is called a trigger. A trigger is when something causes a stress reaction in your dog's body or mind. A dog that is experiencing trigger stacking cannot recover as quickly as they could if they were only affected by one trigger.

I like to think of trigger stacking in terms of a monster. Each trigger individually is only a part of the monster, something small enough that it can be overcome. In parts, the monster can be conquered but as a whole it is too challenging. Once your dog sees the whole monster, it is too scary and they want to run away or make it disappear. This is when trigger stacking has taken place.



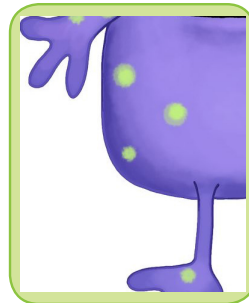
**TRIGGER 1**

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**TRIGGER 2**

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**TRIGGER 3**

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**TRIGGER 4**



**OVER THRESHOLD**

One way to tell if your dog is over threshold is to see if they will still take treats. If they are taking treats but doing so in a grabby way or, not taking treats at all, they are most likely over threshold.

You can avoid your dog going over threshold by learning your dog's triggers, learning about signs of stress in dogs and then making a plan to manage your dog's environment to avoid situations where a trigger might take place. Pay attention to how many stressful events are happening at once and how they are each affecting your dog.