

TIPS FOR TRAINING

Loose Leash Walking

Why do dogs pull on leash?

Being dragged down the street by your dog is not anyone's idea of a good time but from your dog's point of view it may be a great way for him to get where he wants to go. Once a dog discovers that, pulling on leash gains him access to things he wants, pulling then becomes the preferred strategy when out on a walk. Besides, there is no point of a dog giving up something that works so well. Dogs are highly motivated to explore and if a tight leash gives him that freedom to do so then pulling will continue to happen. A variety of motivational factors may exist for this behavior, the desire to explore the proverbial marking areas, investigating another dog or person, or just to be able to move faster than the slow boring pace of his owner. Clearly if you have a dog that pulls on leash the main culprit is the fact that pulling on leash produces success, he gets to move forward.

The problem:

Pulling on leash can be dangerous for everyone involved, not to mention embarrassing when you don't have control. Dogs that display this behavior unfortunately are much more likely to be isolated and not walked. Less walks mean poor leash manners will be more difficult to break later. There will also be less opportunities for the dog to become properly socialized and the more likely to develop aggressive tendencies.

The solution:

Walking your dog on leash shouldn't mean that you'll have to make frequent trips to the chiropractor. In fact, it doesn't have to be painful at all, there are great solutions that don't require you to have superhuman strength or to be forceful. Start with good quality equipment such as a 6 to 8-foot leash that feels comfortable to hold and a good fitting no-pull harness. Begin practicing in a low distraction environment, driveway, backyard, or to the next tree and back are great places to start. Following on a loose leash will be your goal, whereas your dog's goal will be to go where he wants. The difference is that you control forward movement and forward movement will be contingent on a loose leash. A tight leash will convey failure while a loose leash will convey success. Your dog wants to move forward and if he learns the only way to do so is with a loose leash, pulling becomes a thing of the past.

Supplying consequences of success and failure in dog training is very powerful especially for teaching loose leash walking, but for some dogs their incessant straining on the leash may be due to a variety of emotional factors. These dogs need extra help in coping with the outside world before they can walk on a loose leash. If this is your dog contact us and we will be happy to give you an accurate assessment of what needs to be done.



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