



## "Enjoyable Walks" on a Loose Leash!



The best way to prevent pulling on leash...is to never allow it to happen!

When out with your puppy, always walk away from puppy as he will naturally want to follow. Use a long line and move with your puppy so there is no tension on the leash. If puppy is on shorter leash, don't take one single step if your puppy is pulling, not one step, just wait for him to make his leash loose again - and reinforce that decision. Teach puppies the rules & where to find the reinforcement from Day #1!

The best way to give reinforcing treats when your dog is successfully walking at your side, is to touch your hip with the treat hand FIRST (touch your knee, if puppy is low to the ground). Your dog will likely stay at your side, since his treats 'come from' your side. As you are training, hold 5-6 treats in your hand on the side where your dog is walking. Slide just one treat up to your fingers, touch your hip and slip your dog a treat for walking nicely at your side. Hold your leash handle in the hand opposite to the side on which your dog is walking: hold your treats in the hand on the same side as your dog is walking, so you can easily touch your hip, deliver a treat! (NOTE: puppy should not 'grab' the treat - all 4's on the floor, when you give that treat!)

Establishing 'Owner' gravity: Start with a young puppy by encouraging him to follow you. They will naturally want to be close to you, so just keep moving, and always move away from the puppy. He can't follow you if you are not going somewhere! And if you are moving towards the puppy, you'll end up following him instead of the other way around. If puppy wanders, turn & start a slow run in the opposite direction, making a silly noise to get his attention. When you teach puppy to follow you, you are already creating an invisible 'leash' between you & puppy!

Practice in the house, then move to your yard, then move to your driveway (on a long line outside for safety!)

Teaching 'Silky Leash' (Grisha Stewart): gently move your leash in a direction, with the slightest amount of pressure. Wait. As soon as your puppy moves in that direction and the leash loosens, mark & reinforce. Start in a small room in your house, then in bigger spaces; then add a few low value distractions, then move outdoors. Eventually, mark and reinforce after only longer periods of walking beside you on a 'silky leash'.

Know how to hold your leash: 'thumb-lock' hold on the opposite side to where you dog is walking. As your loose leash walk improves, you can easily hold your leash, in a 'thumb-lock' in the hand on the same side to wher your dog is walking. Putting your leash around your waist is another great way to keep the pressure off your leash as you learn!

### Meanwhile, you have some options to PREVENT the pulling.

- 1.) Use a long line, and move with your puppy, so he never learns to pull towards interesting things. Instead of pulling puppy, use 'slow stop', 'mark & move', 'slide', or 'mime pulling' to move your puppy along.
- 2.) Nurture and reward any 'unprompted attention'. Begin with your dog on a long line, and stand still. Let him wander as he wants, to the full length of the lead. When he gets to the end of the leash, he can't get any further, and he is likely to look back to you. Mark and reward the instant he looks at you. As he gets good at looking back to you from time to time, move with him, then stop and wait! Same reward for unprompted attention - as soon as he looks at you, mark and reward.
- 3.) Walk in circles! Puppies and dogs tend to pull forward when walking in a straight line. Walk in circles, change direction, follow unpredictable patterns to help your dog learn to be attentive to you, and to walk without pulling forward. Reinforce often, as your dog moves with you, responding to slight tension as you turn.
- 4.) Build 'focus & fun stations' into your walk. Every 150' or so, engage your dog in hand targets, or parkour, or simple 'tricks' or drills or play. Keep his focus with you by being more fun than the environment. Your dog is pulling because he is looking for something to do - be the source of that something!
- 5.) Puppy PULLS, you FREEZE, just 'be a tree' and stand perfectly still in one spot. SAY NOTHING! Let him go the length of his leash and just wait until he looks back at you. The split second he 'checks in' by looking back at you, to see why you stopped, say, 'yes, good boy' - chances are he will then move back to you, and you can give him a tasty treat!

Yes, you will stop a million times, in the beginning of this...but he will get that staying close to you means good things - treats, right now!

"This Way!"



- 6.) When your puppy pulls ahead of you, just say, 'This Way' to give him a hint that something is about to change, then turn in the opposite direction to which he is pulling. And just walk. He will have to come with you! If he gets in front and pulls again, you turn again. When he seems to 'get it' and walks beside you, say, 'Yes, Good Boy' and give him a few treats while he is still at your side.

- 7.) Teach a 'Turn' cue, where you will turn INTO your dog: put your leash hand back a little, take one big step towards your dog to now be in front of him. Mark, reinforce. Then, simply move on in the opposite direction. When your dog 'gets it', add the cue 'Turn'. Then, cue the turn, turn & delay marking & reinforcement until you are moving the other way.

