



Leash Handling Skills

If you want your dog to walk nicely then the first thing you must learn is how to properly handle a leash. Many people constantly mishandle their dogs leash and actually cause the dog to pull or act up on the lead.

The following are signs that you could be mishandling the lead:

- 🐾 Your dog bites the lead,
- 🐾 Your dog rolls on the ground when the leash is attached (I call this Death Rolling)
- 🐾 Your dog flips onto its back (I call this a Tap-Out) when the leash is attached
- 🐾 Your dog paws at the lead
- 🐾 Your dog jumps on the lead
- 🐾 Your dog constantly jumps on you when the leash is attached

Imagine having a collar around your neck with a leash attached to it. Then imagine having someone constantly pulling, tugging, yanking and holding the leash tight. This is bound to be annoying at very least, or even painful.

Understandably, you might try to stop this person from annoying or hurting you using any means possible. Initially you might glare at them, then you may grab at the lead in order to reduce the tension around your neck, you may have to escalate into pushing and shoving. Why would dogs be any different?



Leads are there purely as a last resort safety device – just in case a cat runs past you while you're out walking. You must not control your dog with the lead. Many people try to 'steer' their dog with a lead. Use training and communication to control your dog's movements, not the lead.

Things you should NEVER do with a lead

Sometimes people create leash aggression or reactivity in a dog by mishandling the lead in the presence of other dogs and/or humans. Worried about their dog's intentions, whether that be jumping on a human or aggressing at a dog, they immediately tighten up on the lead and put their dog into alert mode.

Try thinking of your lead as an umbilical cord that joins you and your dog. You communicate your feelings through the lead. This is especially true when your dog is ahead of you and cannot see you.



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Now imagine you're walking down the street and you see a person walking toward you with their rather large German Shepherd. Your instincts, for whatever reason, tell you not to let the two dogs meet. You then instantly tighten up on the lead by wrapping it around your hand, hoping to avoid a conflict by having a shorter leash. This alerts your dog, who then looks up and sees the person with their dog heading right for you. In effect, you've just said to your dog **"LOOK OUT!!! THERE'S ANOTHER DOG COMING!!!"**.

DO NOT do any of the following when your dog is on lead:

- 🐾 Wrap the lead around your hand
- 🐾 Hold the lead halfway down – shortening and putting tension in the lead
- 🐾 Hold the lead up in the air like you're carrying a bucket of water
- 🐾 Grab quickly at the lead

Tools Required For Lead Walking

- 🐾 Collar – either Buckle or Snap-lock
- 🐾 1.5m Lead
- 🐾 Treat Pouch

How To Position Yourself

1. Wear your treat pouch on your left hip
2. Put your right hand through the handle of the lead until the handle rests on your wrist, then grasp the lead
3. Bring your right hand into your body, holding the lead against your belly button.
4. Position yourself so that your dog is on your left hand side
5. Deliver treats with your left hand
6. Unless using a Head Halter – KEEP YOUR LEFT HAND OFF THE LEAD!

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