



Does Your Dog Pull On Lead?

Pulling on lead is the number one complaint among dog owners who attend our classes! Unfortunately most owners have contributed to, if not directly caused, this problem by allowing our dogs to pull in the first place. Most dogs are rewarded for pulling on a lead! They soon realise that if they pull, you will follow and they get to go where they want.

When you take your dog out for a walk, he is full of energy and eager to explore. So eager, as a matter of fact, that the first thing he does is strain forward on the lead. You then follow.

"Aha!" he thinks. "Pulling on this thing gets me walked!" So he keeps pulling on the lead and sure enough, you keep following. In a very short period of time, your dog begins to think that pulling on the lead makes you keep going.

Teaching your dog to walk nicely on a lead is a simple process. **IF YOUR DOG PULLS DO NOT FOLLOW! STOP IMMEDIATELY!**

Your dog is trained to believe the following:

"pulling on lead = forward movement"

We need to re-train the following:

"pulling on lead = no forward movement"

"not pulling on lead = forward movement"



In other words, if your dog is walking on a nice loose lead (i.e. not pulling) you walk along happily together. **The SECOND you feel the lead tightening you stop and wait until your dog loosens the lead once again.**

Consistency is the key here! If you allow your dog to pull sometimes he will continue to pull. You must never take a single step if the lead is tight! When you come to a stop **WAIT IT OUT.** Do not move again until the lead is loose. Initially this may take some time and you and your dog may become frustrated as you wait for 20 minutes for your dog to loosen the lead. If you give in you are rewarding pulling!

If your dog is pulling toward something (i.e. another dog, a tree, the dog park) **DO NOT ALLOW HIM TO GET THERE!!!!** This is where penalty yards come in handy, walk backwards away from what your dog is pulling towards. Once you have a loose lead you may set off in your original direction again.

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Initially you may not even get out of your front yard on a walk. Be prepared for this. If you need to walk for your own fitness go walking without your dog. If your dog needs exercise drive him to an off-lead park or throw a ball in the back yard until he learns to walk politely on lead.

If your dog is large and strong you may need to use a head harness or harmony harness. These training tools provide 'power steering' for your dog. Talk to us if you need further information or would like to purchase one.

Remember that when your dog is not pulling MARK AND REWARD OFTEN! Too many people are stingy with rewards when teaching loose lead walking.

As with all exercises this is best taught in a non-distracting environment and once learned **GRADUALLY** add distractions until the behaviour is 'proofed'.



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