

# Loose Leash Walking

(Two sides)



The opposite  
of Loose Leash Walking  
is **PULLING!**

It takes **TWO** to pull - the dog, and YOU!



**Tight leashes create pulling habits**

If you exert tension on the leash,  
your dog will lean against it.



**Inattentive owner = inattentive dog**

**ATTENTION** is step one in teaching your dog to walk nicely on leash.

Your dog needs to know his name and/or a “watch me” cue and respond by looking eagerly at your face. Say the dog’s name and your attention cue in a happy voice, randomly and to alert the dog to ANYthing fun: right before a treat delivery, dinner, picking up his leash, going through a doorway, getting in or out of the car.

“Spot! Watch me!” predicts treats, doors open, fun happens, dinner is delivered.

**Preserve the cue** by ONLY giving it when you know the dog is likely to respond. Chanting demands in ever increasing volume with added impatience will kill the positive aspect and quick response to this important cue. Keep it fun and POSITIVE!

## **NO NAGGING!!**

Give pleasant, interactive attention to your dog and he will pay more attention to you.

## **PLAY OFF-LEASH “FOLLOW ME” GAMES**

From the beginning, take advantage of your puppy’s inborn orienting reflex. Teach your puppy the importance of keeping track of you and watching where you are going. Praise and reward for keeping up and for finding you if you become “lost”.

Play “catch me if you can” in the house and safely fenced yard. Start in non-distracting places first. Exclaim “Let’s Go!” and hurry away, being ready to praise and deliver a tasty treat when he catches up. Change direction - “this way!” and again congratulate him for arriving next to you with petting and praise. Hold the food up by your shoulder in between rewards and deliver the treat in one swift motion, right into his mouth just below nose level to eliminate jumping.

Keep it fun! Make it challenging but attainable. Keep him guessing. Whatever your pup does, do the opposite. If he fades left, turn and run to the right, if he rushes ahead, exclaim “uh-oh!” turn and run the other way. If you always deliver the reward in the same place, next to your leg on the same side each time, he will start showing up there every time you take off without him. **Hide if he loses you! Cheer when he finds you!**

## **ADD THE LEASH WHEN YOU CAN’T LOOSE HIM OFF LEASH**

But remember DON’T PULL ON IT! The leash should hang like the letter J. When he is happily racing to fall in next to you for the next delivered treat, attach the leash but give lots of slack. Take one step away, mark his attention with an enthusiastic “YES!” and deliver the treat, bring your hand back up to your shoulder, take one step, “YES” treat, repeat. If he gets lost, exclaim “uh-oh!” drop the leash and ditch him so he rushes to catch you again. When he’s good at one step (you don’t lose him) increase it to two, then three, then four between food deliveries. Pretty soon you will be walking several steps with enthusiasm between “Yes! / food deliveries” with your pup trotting along with eyes and ears on you!

## **KEY POINTS:**

**DO NOT TIGHTEN THE LEASH!**

**MARK ATTENTION & POSITION WITH A “YES!”**

**WORK IN NON-DISTRACTING SITUATIONS AT FIRST!**



**Attention, slack leash, nice position!**

## WHEN HE'S GOOD AT HOME, TAKE IT ON THE ROAD!

Start in your living room, then your yard, then your driveway, then the little patch of sidewalk in front of your house, then the neighbor's house, a little ways down the street, and eventually around the block.

### DELIVER REWARDS IN TARGET POSITION, NEXT TO YOUR LEG

Your dog will begin to gravitate to that position naturally. Mark the magic box next to your leg with a "YES!" / reward so he knows when he is right.

### WHEN YOU LOSE HIM AND HE PULLS:

#### APPLY PENALTY YARDS OR CHANGE OF DIRECTION / SPEED

IF the dog can walk the required distance entirely without putting any tension on the leash, he gets the reward of getting there! ANY tension on the leash causes the handler to instantly freeze, go backward or change direction. Pulling increases the distance from the desired thing, keeping slack in the leash means he gets closer.




The dog gets to go where it wants when the handler gets what he wants - a walk with no pulling!

At first, you will reward with food treats. As he learns the game, you will reward with speed, smells, getting to make it to the car, the park, a person who wants to pet him.

Increase steps between rewards as your dog is ready. Remember situations dictate difficulty level. Increase the rate of reinforcement when passing difficult distractions. Go back to rewarding less often, unexpectedly for excellence, in less distracting situations. Don't be stingy!

### PENALTY YARDS:

Distraction or rewarding thing:

Cat >   
friendly neighbor,  
interesting smell,  
or plate of food

Dog notices distraction and loses focus on handler.

Handler fades.

As the dog is ABOUT to tighten the leash the handler exclaims ..... "UH OH!"

and shoots backward.

Dog runs out of leash and turns to see what happened to the handler. < Food in L. hand - walk backward.

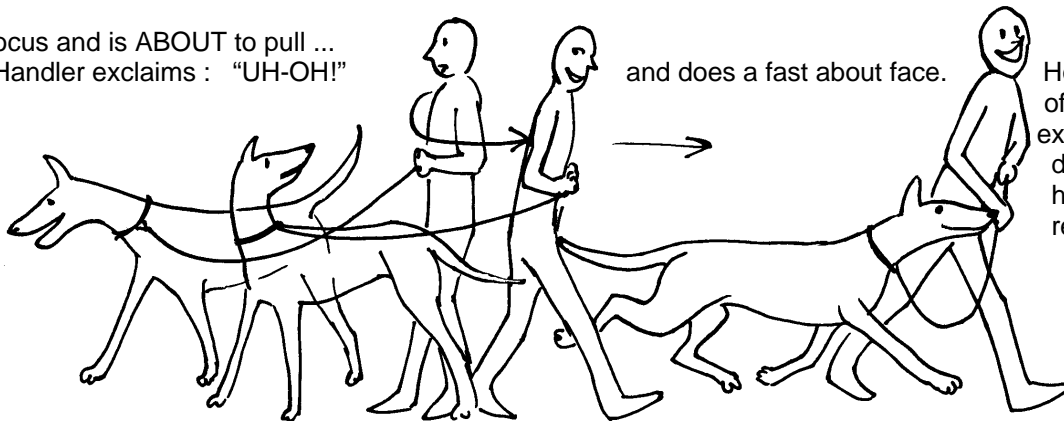
Handler lures dog in counter clockwise circle with food in left hand, feeding in target position. "YES!"

Then proceeds forward again.

As long as the leash is slack, and the dog is next to the handler's leg, the dog will get closer to where he wants

### DIRECTION / SPEED CHANGE:

Dog loses focus and is ABOUT to pull ...  
Handler exclaims : "UH-OH!"



and does a fast about face.

Holding food at seam of pant leg, handler exclaims "YES!" when dog's nose reaches the hand and delivers the reward in target position.

**THE TEST:** close your eyes. If you can feel your dog on the end of your leash, the leash is tight. He should not feel you and you should not feel him. Your communication is through praise and reward, behavior and response. The leash should hang like the letter J - down from his collar and then up to your hand. If it's straight, DO something to alleviate the tension!