

Recipe for Great Leash Manners

Great leash manners are easy for some dogs, and a real challenge for other dogs. If your dog is a confirmed puller, you will have to train a little harder but you and your dog can learn to walk together without either of you pulling on the leash!

Keys to success:

- While you are training, use a “management” tool for walking such as a front clip harness or a head halter. My favorite is the Freedom Harness because it has plenty of adjustments so that you can fit it easily to most dogs. It also has two points to attach the leash. For serious pullers, we can work with a double-ended leash for the best results.
- Always let your dog know when you want him to be with you. Say: “With me” or “Heel” or “Let’s go.”
- Very important! Always let your dog know when he is finished walking with you and can go and sniff and check out the environment. Say: “All done” or “Go sniff” or “Take a break.”
- If you have a safe place to work, try to do the training off leash at first, then add the leash later.
- Train at home before you use it on your walks.

The steps in brief:

1. **Attention first.** Your dog will not be able to walk with you if s/he cannot pay attention to you. Follow the “Attention Games for Beginners” or the “Attention Fix” exercises for one week.
2. **Find the spot.** You and your dog both need to understand the spot next to you that will earn the rewards. Your dog’s head should be at your knee; you should reward at your pant seam at your dog’s head.
3. **Turn and go’s.** Teach your dog to follow and catch up to you when you turn away. This will give you a lot of opportunities to reinforce/reward your dog in the “spot.”
4. **Pattern training.** By walking large patterns on the ground such as circles, squares and figure eights, you and your dog will learn to work together on turns and on pace changes. Your dog will learn to pay attention to your body and anticipate movement.
5. **Walk and treat.** Straight line walking is probably the most difficult piece of leash walking. Help your dog learn to walk with you in a straight line with walk and treat.

Once your dog can do these exercises off leash, add the leash and keep practicing.

(continued on next page)

Moving to the real world and real-life walks:

- When your dog is fluent on these behaviors in a low distraction environment, you can take it on the road.
- Do short practices two or three times on your walk or other new locations.
- Walk together for 10-20 feet, then give your dog a break to sniff. Make the walking with you short, and the sniffing long at first. Gradually, over time, make the walking with you longer and the go sniff shorter.
- Practice in more challenging situations when s/he's got it!

Always allow your dog some time to check out the environment. This is important for dogs and their emotional wellbeing.