

OUTSIDE STROLL CHALLENGE

Why bother with training walks?

Because every walk is a training walk: Your puppy *will* learn something. Why not determine what that will be? Besides, you and your puppy will both enjoy your walks far more this way.

How to prepare.

Step 1. Decide the following:

- What will you do when another dog crosses your path?
(Cross the street? Ask your puppy to sit while the other dog passes? Ask your puppy to loose leash walk as you pass by? Allow your puppy to politely meet the other dog?)
- What will you do when you meet people?
(Cross the street? Ask your puppy to sit to say hello? Ask for loose leash walking as you pass by?)
- How will you handle potentially interesting things like trash on the ground, baby strollers, squirrels, etc?
(Leave it? Come?)
- How will you handle potentially frightening or startling things like loud noises, rambunctious children, or, for shy puppies, other puppies or people?
(Cross the street or move in the opposite direction to create distance from the scary thing? Give treats and cheer your puppy on? Use loose leash walking to quickly move past?)

Step 2. Bring tasty treats, and choose a walking route with just the right amount of challenge for your puppy. If your puppy is relatively new to training or on the shy side, choose a route with low traffic of people, dogs, and other distractions, so you can practice successfully.

Step 3. Take the walk, actively scanning the environment so you can respond proactively to challenges (cats, other dogs, people) rather than reacting when they are already too close.

After the walk.

After you return home, assess how the training walk went.

- What did your puppy do well?
- What needs extra practice?
- Is there anything you want to do differently next time?

Troubleshooting: If you have trouble keeping your puppy's attention focused on you, try an easier route on the next walk, bring tastier treats, and walk your puppy before his mealtime, not after.