



## Loose Leash Walking

Walking with your dog should be fun and relaxing for both of you. If your canine companion is constantly pulling on leash, walking is more of a chore. “Loose leash walking” means walk with me while keeping slack in the leash (no pulling). This is not the strict “heel” cue used in obedience trials.

### Equipment needed:

- A 6-foot (flat) non-retractable leash
- Collar
- Treats / treat pouch

You can use various methods to teach dogs to walk without pulling on leash. No single method works for all dogs. Here are some overall guidelines before we look at several methods.

Until your dog learns to walk without pulling, consider all walks training sessions. Keep training sessions frequent, short and fun for your dog.

Since loose-leash training sessions will be too short and slow to provide adequate exercise, find other ways to exercise your dog until he’s mastered loose-leash walking. You’ll succeed more quickly if you find a way to tire your dog out before taking him on a training walk. Dogs often pull because they’re full of excess energy. Before you train, play a game of tug, play fetch with your dog’s favorite toy, or have a dog playdate with some of your dog favorite buddies.

Teaching a dog to walk without pulling requires plenty of rewards. Use highly desirable treats cut into small pieces (ex: lunch meat, hot dogs, chicken, cheese, freeze dried foods, or peanut butter) that your dog doesn’t get at other times.

### Option One: Red Light, Green Light -

1. Walk in your intended direction.
2. The instant your dog reaches the end of his leash and pulls, red light! — stop in your tracks and wait. When he stops pulling and puts slack in the leash (maybe he turns to see what you’re doing and this makes the leash a little slack), call him back to you. When he does, say “Yes,” give him a treat and resume walking (green light).
3. If your dog looks up at you in anticipation of more tasty treats, quickly say “Yes,” and give him one while you keep walking. If he pulls again, repeat the red-light step above.

As you’re walking, reward your dog frequently for staying next to you or slightly ahead and for looking up at you and making eye contact as we always say **EYE CONTACT IS THE MOST REWARDABLE BEHAVIOR!!!**

### Option Two: Using your feet –

1. Start with your dog standing at your left side **keep your hands still** (remember the point of this exercise is to use your feet not your hands)
2. Start to walk with your leash approximately 4-5 feet in length (the dog can walk in front of you as long as they are not pulling or creating any tension)
3. If the dogs pulls ahead and creates tension on the leash start to move in the opposite direction (the goal is to create feather weight leash pressure aka none)
  - a. If the dog is pulling left, you walk right
  - b. If the dog is pulling straight ahead, you walk backwards



4. As soon as the dog starts to look at you (this is created by the backwards movement) mark with the word “yes” (or a clicker can also be used as a marker) and then reward your dog when he returns to your left side
5. Make sure to only give rewards when moving in the forward direction and on your left hand side
6. As you’re walking, reward your dog frequently for staying next to you or slightly ahead and for looking up at you and making eye contact as we always say **EYE CONTACT IS THE MOST REWARDABLE BEHAVIOR!!!**
7. The goal of this exercise is to make your dog’s walk while not in the perfect heel position but always walk on a tension free (loose leash).

**The selection of collars and gizmos are endless and can be overwhelming there are so many tools that can help make your pup the perfect walking companion here are just a few:**

The right equipment is very important for safety and success. Make sure the leash is in good condition and is no longer than 6 feet. A Front clip harnesses can work well for some dogs such as the Easy Walk Harness, Balance Harness by Blue K9 or The Freedom Harness. Head halters such as The K9lifeline Sidekick Leash, Gentle Leader, or Halti are also appropriate as they give good control by allowing you to control the dog’s head which can frequently reduce pulling by itself with proper conditioning. A martingale collar (which is a no-slip collar) or even a Starmark collar (which is a modified pinch collar) are always options. As always, every dog is an individual and no tool is ever a one size fits all approach wo when in doubt, consult a dog trainer. possible strategies.

Loose Leash Walking is a skill that takes time, patience and consistency. If you find your dog is having a difficult time with this exercise, the environment may be too distracting. You can go to a quieter area, increase the value of your treats or try a different collar.