

Leash Training

Agility 4 Fun
"Helping Owners Live Happily with their Pooches"
(785) 820-0011

This article will address two agendas; **How to teach your companion to love the leash** and **Train your dog to sit before you put on his leash**

Leash training can be difficult for many puppies. Only after your puppy gets used to wearing a buckle collar around his neck do we attach a leash. Then we must help your puppy learn how to walk on leash without fear. Have a number of treats with you for this exercise.

Attach the leash to your puppies' collar. Now let your puppy drag the leash around **ONLY** under supervision. Do this in an area where there are no to little distractions preferably in the backyard or in the house. You must at all times be with your dog during this training; the leash could get caught on something. Let your dog drag the lash with you following him. After a while pick up the lash and follow the dog around again for a while. Do not let the lash get tight, keep it loose. Do this part of the exercise for one or two days inside and outside before continuing.

Most young puppies resist collars and leads by rolling, scratching, and collapsing. Don't give up and **DON'T** pick your puppy up and carry him or your soon have a uncontrollable dog.

Note: Forget about heeling for now. We're working on our partnership in which the dog and person can get out together in the fresh air without a major struggle.

The next step is to begin to restrict your dog's ability to wonder, while requiring the dog to walk the direction you want to go. Try and keep the leash loose at all times. If your puppy begins to pull slowly just turn around and go the other way while talking to him and encouraging him to follow you with your voice. Lavish him with praise and good dog comments along with food rewards. To help him understand that he is to follow you when you turn squat down a little as you turn. Don't wait for the leash to become tight before you take action. One of the biggest mistakes is to drag or pull him. Do not drag him back to your side. Use a quick tug, then immediately release so the leash is slack again. If it doesn't all happen in 3/10ths of a second, it's taking too long and your puppy will not learn to walk nicely on leash.

Before expecting your dog to calmly walk beside you on leash, train her to be calm when you are putting her leash on. Most dogs learn very quickly that they must sit while the leash is being attached to the collar. They usually tremble with excitement, ready to explode into frenzy as soon as this phase is accomplished.

If your dog likes to bite the leash you can spray a product called Bitter Apple on the leash. You can also try other items such as wrapping the leash in tin foil. Read my article **Common Sense and Chewing** for more suggestions.

For more information see my related articles; **Pulling on Leash**; for Pull prevention exercises and Existing pulling problems.

Sit while I put on your leash

To help your dog accomplish sitting still while you put on the leash you must first train your dog to stay in a sit while you have the leash out. The dog must learn that if she cannot stay while you attach the leash, the walk is delayed until she does. Don't give in or she will learn that it's OK to be out of control. If your dog doesn't have a reliable sit-stay, practice training her to sit-stay without the distraction of the prospect of a walk. Next get your dog use to the leash being out while holding a sit-stay. The next step is to work with your dog until she can do a sit-stay with you

holding onto the leash. Do not try to attach the leash until the dog can remain in a sit-stay as you reach for her collar.

This may take a lot of training but once the dog understands what it is you want they catch on fast. If your dog happens to get up when you reach for her collar pull your hand back and tell her to sit-stay again, repeat process as many times as needed. Once you can take a hold of her collar without her standing don't attach the leash quickly, hold onto the collar and move it around for a few seconds before attaching the leash. This is in case you have trouble finding the tab to attach the leash. If at any time your dog gets up pull the leash back and repeat the command sit-stay.

Once you accomplish getting the leash on without the dog getting up, if the dog bolts towards the door, dragging you behind, then the situation is still out of control. Simply hold onto the leash, stand still and let your dog dance, and bounce around at the end of the leash. It may take 5 minutes or more, but she will soon realize that you are not going anywhere and will begin to calm down. When this happens, praise her for being good. After another minute or so, take your first step, but NOT towards the door. Instead, walk your dog around your house, garage or yard to give her a chance to potty and practice her "not-pulling" skills. Every time she pulls, lunges or strains on the leash simply stand still again. When she calms down talk to her and praise quietly. Keep her attention on yourself instead of the door that leads to the outside. When you feel your dog is in control and walking nicely without pulling in the house or yard, then it is time to proceed to the great outdoors.

If you are on a walk and your dog starts to pull, it is essential that you instantly stop walking, until she calms down before you continue. It takes a tremendous amount of effort in patience at first but it will be well worth it in the end. The loose leash responsible heeling exercises you learned in puppy class will also help with pulling.

For more information see my related articles; **Pulling on Leash**; for [Pull prevention exercises](#) and [Existing pulling problems](#).