

How to Walk Your Dog on a Leash Without Pulling

Dogs who walk politely when they're on a leash are dogs who walk calmly by your side without jumping at people or pulling you down the street. Sounds nice, doesn't it? If your dog has a habit of walking you, try the following exercises designed to help put you back in control and make walks more enjoyable for both of you.

Start inside. Attach a leash to your dog and give a command that will eventually mean 'by my side'.

Walk here and there around the house. Make lots of twists and turns. Say "yes" and give the dog a tasty treat whenever he is walking by your side.

If your dog drifts away from your side, don't yell or pull on the leash, just turn the opposite way and walk. When he catches up and is at your side - say "yes" and give a treat.

When he gets really good at walking by your side, have him take two or three, then four or five, etc. steps at your side before you say "yes" and give a treat.

When he can take 15-20 steps at your side with only one "yes" and treat at the end, you can move your practice outside.

Start in the back yard (fewer distractions than in the front). You may have to go back to saying "yes" and giving a treat for two or three good steps at your side until your dog understand that the command means 'by my side' outside too.

When he can take 15-20 steps at your side for one "yes" and treat, move to the front yard. Again, go back to getting two or three steps for a "yes" and treat and slowly work your way up to taking more steps.

Important: don't let your dog continue to walk forward if he is not at your side. Stop and wait for him to return to you - or turn and walk in the opposite direction. Don't yank or pull on the leash, just turn and walk your dog away from what he's pulling toward.

When your dog is successfully walking 15-20 steps in your neighborhood for one "yes" and treat, it's time to slowly eliminate the treats. Give your 'by my side' command and walk forward. If he pulls toward a favorite tree or sniffing spot, turn and walk in the opposite direction. When he's back at your side, turn and walk toward the scent again. If he pulls again, do an "about turn," and go the other way. As long as he is walking nicely, continue toward the desired "smell." Reward him by letting him approach the smell. He'll soon learn that if he wants to get to something he has to walk nicely toward it. If he pulls, he can't get there.

Alternate using treats sometimes and “smells” other times as his rewards. Eventually you’ll no longer need the treats.

To help get you started “on the right paw,” consider trying one of the new “no-pull” harnesses on the market. There are different brands available. The best are those that have the leash clip on the front, at the dog’s chest.