

## Teaching Your Dog to Stand Politely On-Leash

### Walking Nicely on a Leash – Why Do Dogs Pull?

1. Because they are allowed to and it works for them. They pull to get to other dogs, smells, people and places, and we just follow on behind.
2. Because dogs are overly corrected when in close proximity to the owner they pull to move away from the correction, the owner. If you jerk or tug your dog to teach him not to pull then, for the dog, this means the slackening of the leash is followed quickly by pain or discomfort. Your dog will associate this pain and discomfort with being close to you. Your dog will therefore try to avoid the loose leash and will consequently be more likely to pull on the leash. To be able to jerk a leash you have to slacken it first.
3. Walking on a leash can hurt your dog's neck. Dogs find it more difficult to breathe due to tight collars, so they try to escape this discomfort by moving away, backwards or forwards.
4. If you pull, the dog will pull back – this is called opposition reflex.

Help your dog do the right thing. Praise him so he knows what the correct behavior is. Don't be the person he wants to move away from!

## Standing Politely on Leash

Before we teach a dog how to walk nicely on a leash, let's teach the dog how to be stationary on a leash with no pulling, no straining, and no lunging. Just nice and calm wandering around using the full scope of a 6 ft. (2m) leash without putting tension on the leash.

For this exercise, you must be 100 percent focused on your dog. We should give the dog two-way feedback, yes/click for correct response, neutral for wrong response. The dog will learn the correct response. Every second he is doing anything other than putting tension on the leash we need to reward him.

**Criteria 1** – in a quiet area with no distractions

Stand with the dog on a 6ft. (2m) leash. Yes/click each time your dog does anything other than applying tension on the leash. At first you should be rewarding like crazy. You must give your dog lots of feedback.

If tension goes on the leash, plant yourself like a tree. The minute the tension releases click/yes and your dog will turn toward you. Deliver the treat to the dog by your side. In the future if you think the dog is going to put tension on the leash then click. The click will distract the dog and they will be reinforced for a loose leash before they have a chance to hit the end of the leash. Make sense?

**Criteria 2** – in a quiet area with no distractions

Once your dog has accomplished Criteria 1, we are going to up the ante. We are going to activate some motion. Take one step forward, as your dog follows click/yes then reward. If your dog lunges or lags, plant yourself and reward your dog the minute the tension goes from the leash. Repeat 5 times in a one-step forward motion. When you get a consistent behavior, meaning you can step one pace in any direction and your dog walks one step with you then you can move to the next criteria.

**Criteria 3** - Repeat the exercise 5 times in a sideways motion (right)

**Criteria 4** - Repeat the exercise 5 times in a backwards motion

**Criteria 5** - Repeat this exercise 5 times in a sideways motion (left)

## **Criteria 6** - teaching the 'Let's Go'

When you have a dog that will comfortably stand and hover around you in a calm manner on a leash without pulling and tugging then you are ready to start walking. The Let's Go cue tells the dog we are going somewhere.

Move off quickly in any direction and, as your dog moves with you, say "Let's go." Yes/click as soon as your dog moves with you. Do this several times going in different directions and mixing up the pace.

When you can complete these exercises and get 4 or 5 out of 5 then you can progress. Build your steps forward slowly. If you invest lots of effort into the lower levels of this behavior it will pay off in the long run.