

# LEASH WORK

Posted by [admin](#) - June 25, 2022 - [Leash Work](#)

Leash work is necessary, in that it allows you to have control of your dog while you are teaching him how to be a calm, well behaved companion and family member. Once he understands the rules of life, he won't need to be on a leash all the time. Until then consider the leash your friend. There are also many times when no how wonderful your dog is he will need to be on a leash for safety reasons, or it might be required depending on where you are. So, let's get started!

Your goal when you are working with your dog on the leash is to have him stay focused on you, and to give you his full attention. The same goes for you, you can't be texting or talking on the phone while you are walking your dog and trying to teach him something. You both have to be paying attention to each other in order for the learning process to occur.

Your dog's job while he is on the leash, is to FOLLOW you! He is not allowed to be in front of you, dragging you along his path. He needs to follow you on the path you choose, at the pace you choose, and for the length of time you choose. Teaching him to look to you for guidance is important in the family hierarchy, and it allows the dog to be calm and not anxious, as he will learn that you'll keep him safe.

Learning to walk politely on the leash is the equivalent of teaching young children the ABC's. You can't learn to read if you don't know the foundation letters first. As your skills improve you will learn to read your dog, and he'll learn to read you, and know what to expect as the stories get more complex!

## HOW TO DO IT

Leash placement is very important. You want the leash/collar placed right behind the dog's ears and under his chin. Not low down on his neck. When the leash is placed correctly you will have control of his head, which allows you to control his direction. It is difficult for your dog to pull on you with the leash in this position. When it is low on his neck, he can use all those big neck muscles, and his chest, to pull any direction he wants to go. If you want your dog to pull then he needs to wear a harness. When you learn to walk your dog correctly you don't need to yank or pull on him, and he won't yank or pull on you.

The other rule is that your dog should NEVER start out in front of you. Especially with your arm extended. When you start in that position you are saying to the dog, "Where are you going to take me?" He should be asking you that question.

There should always be slack in the leash. If your dog puts tension in the leash then you will correct him. Always start off with a fairly short leash, as you improve the leash can get longer. I don't recommend retractable leashes. They tend to create problems.

Your arm should be straight and relaxed at your side, unless you are correcting your dog. Then you will bend your elbow and make a short, quick upward bump. Then you immediately straighten your arm out again. You should never hold the leash in a position that keeps the leash tight. This will encourage your dog to pull against you. In the beginning, you will probably be bumping almost continuously to remind your dog to pay attention and not pull. Within a few days of consistent direction, you won't need to bump much at all.

These are just the basic rules. There are lots of little nuances and tricks to use depending on the individual dog. We will get to all of that in class. When you work at home if you have someone who can work with you and watch you, you will be able to progress quicker. It is also helpful if someone else works with the dog and you can watch them. It helps to recognize common mistakes and then correct them yourself.

The key to all the exercises you do with your dog is to be consistent and persistent. He can't learn if one day he gets to run around like a crazy person but the next day you expect him to be perfect. You need to have use the same method every time you interact with him and pretty soon he will offer you those behaviors on his own. The whole family will be happier when everyone knows what's expected of them!