



## Teaching loose leash walking

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There are two ways of walking with your dog on leash; one is to teach your dog to heel at your left hand side, while focusing on you. This is useful in some situations but is physically difficult and tiring for your dog to maintain for long periods. The other way, which I will discuss in this article, is what most of us would use to walk our dogs; the dog can sniff around and explore her environment but should be under control and not pulling on her leash.

There are four ways to teach your dog not to pull on her leash:

### 1. Be a tree

This is most suitable for puppies who haven't yet established a habit of pulling. Walk with your puppy on leash. If he makes the leash go tight your legs just stop working. Stand still and wait, the moment the puppy loosens the tension on the leash begin walking forward again. This method works very well provided you are consistent. Don't let your dog pull sometimes, however, this will undo all of your hard work.

For older dogs who have begun to pull already the other methods will be more effective:

### 2. Changing direction

Every time your dog pulls on her leash change direction and walk the other way. Your dog, who was ahead of you, is now behind and has to run to catch up. This method works well with most dogs, but you will probably have to work on it over a few walks before your dog really starts to get it.

### 3. Running backwards

When your dog hits the end of his leash say 'oops' and run backwards. Your dog will now start to move backwards also. Once your dog gets level with you, at your side, praise him and begin to walk forward again. This method gets results quite quickly but is best for fit handlers as you need to run backwards fast and will need to do this several times the first time you try it for the dog to get the message.

### 4. Sit and step

This method works really well for dogs who pull very hard and also don't pay much attention to their owners, it takes a bit of time and patience at first, but is very effective and simple for anyone to do. Take one giant step and ask your dog to sit, once she complies take another giant step and ask for a sit. The dog's reward for performing the sit is getting to move forward afterwards. Once your dog is sitting quickly after each step then move on to three steps and asking your dog to sit, then five before asking for a sit and so on until you have a dog who is walking calmly and nicely with you.

The method that will work best depends on both you and on what works best for your dog. If you are unsure try all the different methods and see which you think will work for you.

Once you have made up your mind which method to use, use only this one method to avoid confusing your dog and frustrating yourself. If you find, after trying it for a week or two, that the method you have picked is not working well, then stop using it and try another one.

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