

Walking On a Leash

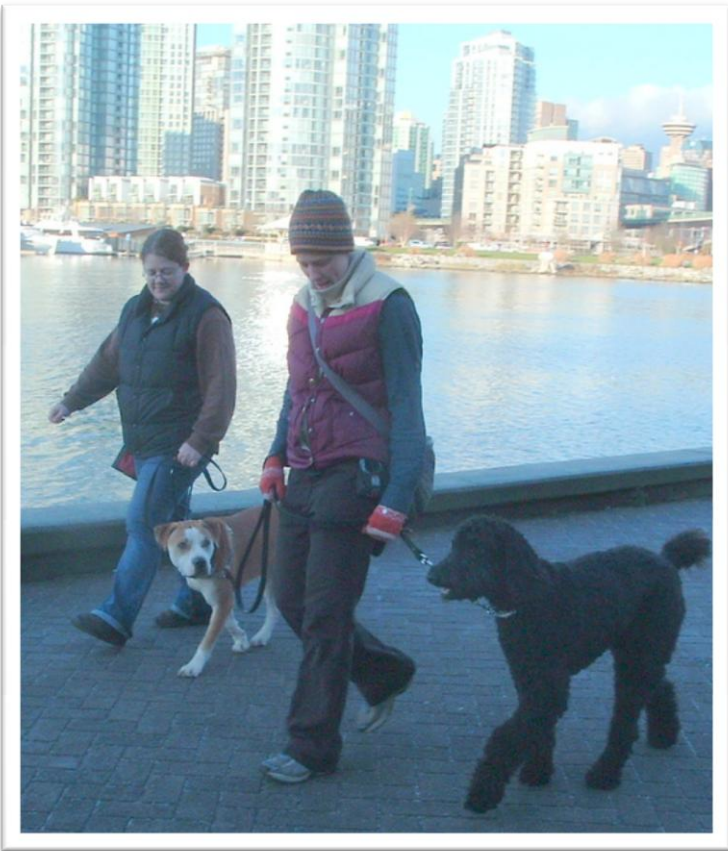
Loose Leash vs Short Leash

Teaching a dog to walk on a loose leash is an important goal. A dog that walks on a loose leash is more likely to be walked, and as a result, be more calm inside and outside the home. Surprisingly, dogs that are taught to walk on a loose leash are usually *easier to have off the leash* because they are used to paying attention to their owners. Teaching a dog to walk on a loose leash takes time, so while training, you will also have to walk your dog on a short, tight leash to establish some leash walking “rules”.

The Rules of Walking (as Taught by a Short Leash Walk).

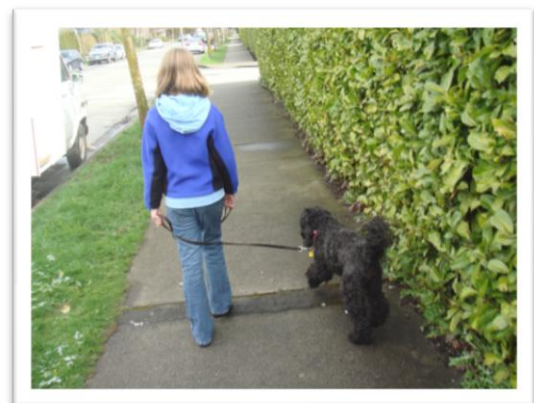
- 1) Walk next to me on the side I choose. It will always be the same side so you can remember.
- 2) No free smelling time unless I “grant” it to you. (Good loose leash walkers ignore smells and lots of distractions). I will use an “Okay” word to let you explore and “go” when you need to go.
- 3) I will always walk you everywhere and everyday on a short leash. This way you have time and consistency to help you learn the new pattern of walking.

Most people find it uncomfortable to teach their dogs the short leash walking rules unless they have a helpful anti-pulling device. Front clip harnesses, Miracle harnesses, and halters (made by Gentle Leader or Halti) are some examples of anti-pulling gear. Do not use a choke chain or even a ½ choke (martingale) as your dog will have difficulty breathing.



Loose Leash Walking is all about Attention.

While you are implementing your short leash walks, start teaching loose leash walking. Your dog will be learning to heel to maintain the loose leash. Heel position is when your dog is walking with its shoulder beside your hip (or your heel, hence the name). Feed and praise your dog plenty for walking in heel position. To teach a loose leash walk using heel, you need to build longevity of attention. This is done with attention games.

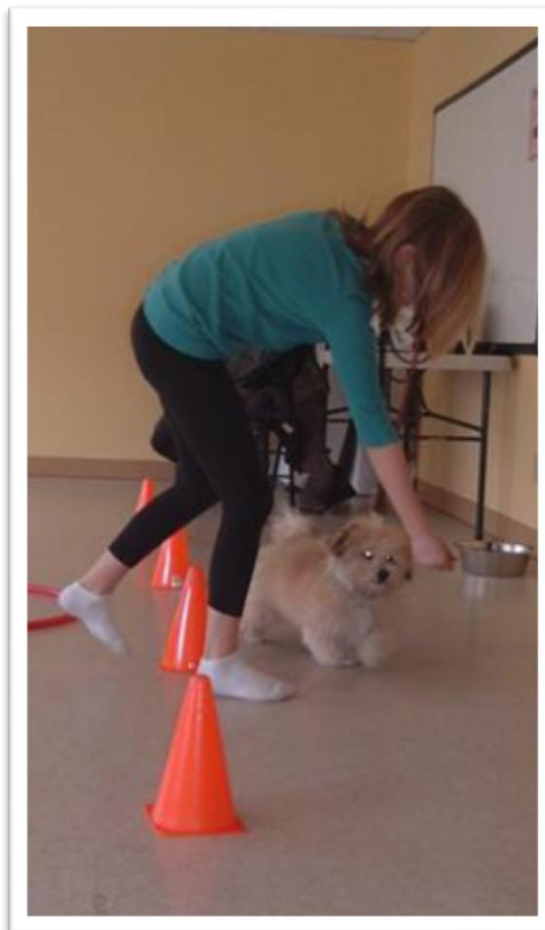


Attention Games

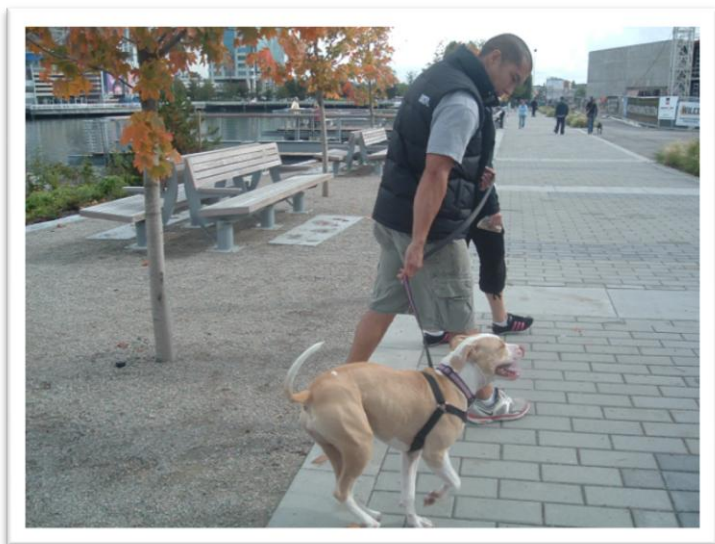
Using *direction changes* keeps your dog upbeat and focused on you. Start by walking forward and then changing direction. Praise and feed your dog for “finding heel position” once they do.

The *Luring Olympics* is a variety of luring games to keep your dog attentive and following your body like they will have to when they are walking on a loose leash. Here is a sample list:

- With your dog lured beside you, complete a 360 degree turn.
- Throw out a toy distraction. Lure your dog away.
- Lure your dog to sit and stand.
- With your dog lured beside you, complete a figure 8.
- With your dog lured beside you, complete a full circle.
- Lure your dog into holding a down-stay for 3 seconds.
- Find another dog. Start 10 feet apart and lure them to pass (and ignore) eachother.



Teaching a *backup into heel* is also a good game to help reinforce where heel position is. Start by teaching your dog to back up in front of you with a treat. Keep the lure low so they don't jump up or sit. Reward for small steps at first. Once your dog can back up for a treat, use a fence and a lure to help your dog back up beside you. Try it without the treat lure and later, without the fence.



Loose Leash Walking games are best taught when you are not trying to get somewhere with your dog. I suggest training loose leash walking in your front yard or at the park without other dogs around. Surrounding your loose leash training should be tight leash walks to and from where you need to go.

Happy Leash Training!

