

No More Pulling! Here's How to Leash Train Your Dog

Irith Bloom, CPDT-KSA

Leash Training Troubleshooting

Try these training tips to curb common behaviors while on leash:

Pulling

If your dog continues pulling, you may be feeding too few treats, the treats may not be tasty (aka high value) enough, or the situation may be beyond your dog's level of training. Feed more often, use super-delicious treats, or take your dog to an easier location.

Lunging or Chasing Things

If your dog lunges or starts chasing something, stop walking and hold steady. Instead of yanking on the leash, call your dog's name in a cheerful tone, making kissy noises, or stamping your feet. Once you have your dog's attention, praise, hand them a treat, and then walk away, feeding treats with each step, until your dog calms down.

If you can't get your dog's attention, you'll have to gently pull them away. This is the "least bad" solution. In a perfect world, your dog will come with you on a verbal cue (like "[come](#)"), but hey, life isn't always perfect. If you do have to pull them away, do not jerk the leash. Instead, anchor your leash hand against your belly button and calmly walk away with the leash held firmly at your abdomen, creating steady but gentle pressure on your dog as you go. Direct your gaze, shoulders and hips in the direction you're walking—to your dog, this implies that you're walking toward something, which just might spark their curiosity and inspire them to join you!

Biting or Playing With the Leash

If your dog keeps turning around to bite or play with the leash, remember this No. 1 rule: Never pull the leash away from the dog! It might seem counterintuitive, but pulling back on a leash your dog is playing with just makes the leash an awesome tug toy. A loose leash is far less fun for your pup.

Instead, move the leash gently toward your dog so all tension is released and they can't get that satisfying tug feeling. If necessary, use two leashes on walks, so that if your dog grabs one, you can let it fall to the ground while keeping your grip on the other leash.

Once your dog has dropped the leash, start walking, praising and rapid-fire treating. Most dogs decide

pretty quickly that walking with you is way more fun than tugging on the leash.