

# How to Teach a Puppy to Walk on a Leash

*Liz Donovan*

Many people think that dogs just innately know how to walk politely on a leash, but this skill is something that needs to be trained. It's an important skill to teach, and one you'll value every time you take your dog out for a walk. Dog training expert and [AKC Family Dog](#) training and behavior columnist [Kathy Santo](#) offers the following tips:

## Training Your Dog to Walk on a Leash

**Introduce the puppy to the collar or harness and leash.** Start out by letting him get used to [wearing a collar](#) or harness and a leash. Let him wear them for short periods of time in the house while you are playing with him and giving him treats. The puppy should love collar-and-leash time because it represents food and fun.

**Teach a cue.** Introduce your puppy to a sound cue that means, "food is coming." Some people like to [click and treat](#), some people use a word like "yes," and some people cluck their tongue. Whichever you use, the method is the same: In a quiet, distraction-free area, with the puppy on a leash and collar, make the sound. The second your puppy turns toward you and/or looks at you, [reward him with a treat](#). After a few repetitions, you'll notice your puppy not only looking at you, but also coming over to you for the treat.

**Make the puppy come to you.** While he's on his way to you, still wearing the leash and collar, back up a few paces and then reward him when he gets to you. Continue the progression until your puppy, upon hearing the cue noise, comes to you and walks with you a few paces. Remember that puppies have a short attention span, so keep your sessions short, and end them when your puppy is still eager to do more, not when he's mentally exhausted.

AKC is a participant in affiliate advertising programs designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to akc.org. If you purchase a product through this article, we may receive a portion of the sale.

**Practice inside.** Now that your puppy understands [how to come to you](#), practice walking a few steps in a room with little distraction. Feeling and seeing the leash around him will be enough of a challenge. Offer treats and praise as your puppy gets used to coming to you, as described above, with a leash on.

**Take it outside.** Finally, you're ready to test your puppy's skills in the Great Outdoors. There will be new challenges with this step because all the sounds, smells, and sights your puppy encounters will be intriguing and new to him. Be patient and keep the first walks short. While you're on a walk, if your puppy looks as if he's about to lunge toward something or is about to get [distracted](#) (you'll notice this because you will keep your eyes on him at all times), make your cue sound and move a few steps away. Then reward him with a treat for following you.

AKC is a participant in affiliate advertising programs designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to akc.org. If you purchase a product through this article, we may receive a portion of the sale.

## Leash-Training Troubleshooting

Even though your puppy may be learning to walk on a leash very nicely, you're likely to run into some issues as he gets older, goes new places, and experiences new distractions. You'll want to [teach him loose-leash walking](#), because it's much more pleasant for you both, and also then he can pass his [Canine Good Citizen](#) test. Here are a few tips on [what to do if you're having trouble](#) with leash training, courtesy of the [AKC GoodDog! Helpline](#).

AKC is a participant in affiliate advertising programs designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to akc.org. If you purchase a product through this article, we may receive a portion of the sale.

**If your pup pulls:** If your dog starts pulling in the other direction, turn yourself into “a tree.” Stand very still and refuse to move until your dog comes back to you. Do not yank or jerk the leash, and do not drag your dog along with you. Front-hook harnesses and head halters are alternative training tools designed for dogs that tend to pull.

AKC is a participant in affiliate advertising programs designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to akc.org. If you purchase a product through this article, we may receive a portion of the sale.