



## Waiting / Loose Leash Walking

### Waiting at the door

Think about a pack of dogs or wolves: Who is always in the front of the pack? The leader! So, if your dog is dragging YOU out the door...who do you think is in charge of the walk?! THE DOG! So it is now time to change that. Each time you make a transition from; inside to outside, in to the car to out of the car, or room to room in your home, you have an opportunity to send a really big message to your dog. You will want to start off with a “wait” every time you go outside, especially when you are going for a walk! If your dog starts the walk off leading you...Guess what? The entire walk will be controlled by him (pulling!)

#### *Practice this:*

Approach a door or get ready to get out of your car.... Use your BODY (not the leash!) to block your dog and wait for him/her to back up. Once you get a few steps back REWARD IT with forward motion through the door, but again, use your body to block your dog if s/he moves towards the door. DO NOT let your dog through the door until s/he has hesitated and backed up a few steps (every dog will be slightly different). You'll have to go out backwards for a few days...then say OK to allow your dog to go through. Once the behavior is consistent, you open the door, your dog will back up or hesitate then you can add the word “WAIT, GOOD WAIT.” Remembering to only say the word “wait” when they are physically waiting and allowing you to go through the door first.

DO NOT try to race them through the door! Try to remember the whole point to this exercise is for your dog to CHOOSE to allow you to go first. We do not want you using the leash because if you are pulling them back, YOU are doing all the work, and we want THEM to allow you to go first! It's all about leadership. Plus it's great for safety! We do not have to use treats in this exercise because going outside or inside IS the reward!

### Loose Leash Walking:

No matter what size your dog is, pulling is BOSSY. So it's not just about being comfortable on your walks, it's also about leadership! Your dog should not be able to control *where* he/she sniffs, *who* you go visit, the *pace*, or *when* you go for a walk. All of this must be controlled by you. Everything about the walk must be on YOUR terms.

#### **There are a few different steps or approaches:**

#### *You pull, I stop:*

Your dog is pulling to get somewhere, there for if he/she pulls, you STOP completely. That way they are not only not going where they want to go, but they aren't going anywhere! Only start moving with your dog gives up and stops putting weight against the leash. Start walking, the minute he/she pulls again, stop! Yes, you will not be getting very far on your walks, but your dog will learn quickly that pulling gets them no where.

*You DONT pull, you get rewarded:*

The very second the leash is slack (even if just for a second) Reward it with a “GOOD” and a treat, or simply with forward motion. Your goal is a leash that looks like a “J” or is slack. If you reward the dog for being right next to you; they are more likely to repeat this behavior. Instead of telling them what NOT to do, lets tell them what TO do! They will soon learn that it pays to not pull.

\* When training outside, we always use higher value treats than when inside. This is due to all the distractions there are outside. We typically use something soft and smelly such as cheese, hotdogs, and chicken.

*You pull, I change direction:*

This is VERY bossy! YOU must be in control of where you are going on the walk, so why not suddenly change directions? Do not slow down and wait for your dog to come with you, just keep going. Switch directions as many times as you want, this is going to teach your dog that he/she better pay attention to you or he/she is going to get pulled around. If they look up at you or start paying attention to you, feel free to reward them with a treat. This simply reinforces the behavior.

*You pull, I back up and reward for coming towards me:*

This is similar to just changing direction, however we are going to start adding in a reward. This is usually very helpful with highly food motivated dogs. Whenever the leash has tension or whenever they are pulling, quickly back up and hold a treat down at your knees. This way the dog comes into you to get the reward. Start walking forward in the same direction you were, if the dog pulls, back up and reward for them coming to you again.

### **From loose leash walking to HEEL**

Heel helps you keep your dog safe in crowds, on sidewalks and gives you more control if you run into another dog or anything that might be harmful or distracting. Heel works best when used during a walk but not for the entire walk. No one can pay attention all the time. Dogs need to sniff and be dogs. Heel training often fails because we expect dogs to do it too much and too often. Young puppies especially, have a difficult time because of their age.

When asking for a heel, define what it is you want. You may like the dog to be close to you on the left but do not really need the perfect heel position. So “heel” to you might mean, “stay close to me on the left as we walk.”

Stand up straight, own the walk and keep your hand down by your knee with plenty of treats – give treats one at a time for every step

Count your steps 10, 20, 30 and be sure to treat at the end of each successful count.

Work all the way towards 60 steps or use time if you want 30 seconds, 60 seconds of heeling. Doing this will give you definable goals and help you see the results while fading the treats at the same time. Say the word “heel” only when your dog is in the heel position. Soon your dog will understand the word heel means to be right next to you.

Start at home and around the yard, avoiding distractions at first and doing it every day. The reward is a treat but releasing your dog from the heel and letting them sniff and play is also a great reward.

Remember when they are not heeling they still cannot and should not be allowed to pull; you are in charge of the walk!