

DOS AND DON'TS TO GET YOU  
STARTED ON THE RIGHT PATH



# STRUT DON'T STRESS

SUCCESSFULLY AND CONFIDENTLY  
TEACH YOUR DOG  
TO WALK CALMLY ON LEASH



# Do

## 1. START PRACTICING ON LEASH INDOORS

Provide a low distraction environment when you first put on the leash and harness. Start training for loose leash walking inside. Walk around your home. Reward them for stopping and checking in with you with treats and praise.

## 2. Use PROPER MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Use a straight 6 foot leash and a properly fitted harness or head halter for maximum success.

## 3. CARRY A TREAT POUCH WITH HIGH VALUE TREATS

Fill your treat pouch with high value treats like hot dogs or meatballs cut up into pea sized pieces. The higher the value, the more likely your dog is going to stay by your side and check in with you.

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# DO

## 4. STOP

When your dog pulls, STOP immediately. Wait for him to check in with you and have slack in the lead before starting again. If this means you only make it to the end of the block in your first outing, that is OK.

## 5. CHECK IN WITH YOUR DOG

While on leash, periodically check in with your dog by calling their name and offering a treat or praise when they turn your way.

## 6. TREAT AND PRAISE CONSISTENTLY

Make sure you carry your treat pouch and give rewards for good behavior every time. It is important to be consistent especially at the beginning of the process in order to create the connection between loose leash walking and positive rewards.

## 7. CONTINUE WALKING ONCE LOOSE LEASH

Once your dog has circled back to you and your leash is again in a loose leash U-shaped position, carry on with the walk.

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# DO

## 8. CHANGE DIRECTIONS AS NEEDED

If your dog is pulling in the direction of another dog, squirrel or other trigger, STOP, wait for your dog to loosen up on the leash and then change directions. Reward once you are calmly heading in a new direction together.

## 9. PRACTICE PATIENCE AND CONSISTENCY

Patience and consistency are key in all dog training. This is particularly important with loose leash walking as there are so many components involved.

## 10. LET THEM EXERCISE IN YARD OR WITH TOYS INDOORS BEFORE A WALK TO RELEASE ENERGY

Before heading out for a walk, try exercising or playing with your dog to release some of their pent up energy. If the only exercise or enrichment they receive is from the walks, they will have less impulse control while out on the walk.

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# DON'T

## 1. DON'T USE RETRACTABLE LEASH OR PINCH/CHOKE COLLARS

Retractable leashes are dangerous. When your dog pulls too hard, the rope can snap and give you or your dog a severe injury on your arm or leg. Pinch and choke collars are aversive and outdated methods of training. They reinforce fear and stress in your animal companions.

## 2. DON'T YANK BACK ON LEASH

By yanking or pulling back on the leash, the dog connects pain with whatever he is trying to reach. It reinforces the behavior or lunging and barking at a 'trigger' such as a squirrel or dog because in their mind, those triggers cause the pain of being yanked and held back.

## 3. DON'T REPRIMAND YOUR DOG

In nearly every case, your dog is acting like a dog. So, we have to think like a dog and provide her with support and guidance to make the choices that we want by reinforcing good behaviors and fading out the unwanted behaviors.

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# DON'T

## 4. DON'T GO FASTER TO KEEP UP

If we pick up the pace to match our dog, we eventually will be running faster than our legs can take us. In order to maintain control and safe speed, STOP if your dog pulls on the leash.

## 5. DON'T SHOW FRUSTRATION OR exasPeRATION

Always end a training session or a walk on a high note. If you feel your frustration level rising, cancel the walk, head home and try again when you are able to stay positive.

## 6. DON'T DROP THE LEASH

Keep both hands on the leash when walking your dog. One hand holds on to the handle. Grip the handle with the palm of your hand and fingers clasped around it. The other hand should be holding on to the leash about half way between you and your dog for extra control.

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# CHeckLIST

## Do

- ✓ Start practicing on leash indoors
- ✓ Use proper management tool
- ✓ Carry a treat pouch with high value treats
- ✓ STOP when your dog pulls
- ✓ Check in with your dog
- ✓ Treat and praise consistently
- ✓ Continue walking once loose leash
- ✓ Change directions as needed
- ✓ Practice patience and consistency
- ✓ Let them exercise in yard or play with toys indoors before a walk to release energy

## DoN'T

- ✗ Don't use retractable leashes or pinch/choke collars
- ✗ Don't yank back on leash
- ✗ Don't reprimand your dog
- ✗ Don't go faster to keep up
- ✗ Don't show frustration or exasperation
- ✗ Don't drop the leash

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Paw Prints University's mission is to provide tools for you and your animal companions to bond and be successful in and outside of your home. We aspire to reduce fear, anxiety and stress by offering rewards based training models that take everyone from chaos to calm.

