

Walking with Manners - Out and About

Teaching Loose Leash Walking is a process, and the process and lessons continue from inside work to outside work. It is important to have realistic expectations at this stage. Walking on leash needs to be fun, AND have some structure so that frustration doesn't develop later because what freedoms they were given as puppies, are now taken away because they are bigger and harder to manage.

Loose leash walking is exactly as it is called - walking with a loose leash - no pulling, no zig-zagging, no lagging behind. With puppies, I like to let them be puppies and have realistic expectations for what a walk will look like during this stage of development. The puppy is allowed to be slightly in front or behind, free to sniff at their feet and look around but not pull. This is very different from heeling which requires precise positioning right next to us, looking at us at all times and sitting when we stop. Heeling is great for short periods of time, but requires too much focus and effort to do for long walks. This is where loose leash walking comes in. People will loose leash walk at least 90% of the time when out with their dogs.

It is also very important to make sure that you walk your puppy in *clean* areas if he is not fully vaccinated yet. No public areas that have grass, dirt, gravel, bark or other surfaces where you can't see what might be hiding in there. Absolutely no public parks or dog parks. Concrete and hard floors in safe areas are fine. Talk with your vet about "safe areas."

Movement Exercises on Leash Outside (best exercise to practice)

Now it is time to start walking and take it out and about! H Use happy sounds for encouragement.

1. Just like when practicing Movement Exercises inside, and out in the yard, now you do it out on your walks.
2. Hold the leash in the hand on the opposite side your puppy is walking on. Treats will be delivered from the hand next to your puppy, close to the side of your leg.
3. Before you begin, lure your puppy into the heel position and have her sit. I also like to cue eye-contact before beginning.
4. Start to walk and say, "let's go" or "let's walk." Make sounds to encourage your puppy to follow you - "puppy, puppy" or make kissing or squeaking sounds, use a jolly voice, pat the side of your leg, etc.
5. When your puppy catches up to you and gets to your side, say your RM and reward with praise/pets and place a treat on the ground next to your foot, or give her a treat from your hand right next to your leg. Then continue to walk and encourage her to follow.
6. Take a number of steps and stop and cue - choose any foundation cue (sit, look, touch).
7. Then take a few more steps and pick a different cue.
8. Once you have your puppy's focus more on you than the environment, stop cueing and capture behavior that your puppy offers while walking.
9. Then stop and wait for another behavior offered by your puppy and reward.

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10. Continue this for a short distance (like from mailbox to mail box, or house to house), and then stop, wait for your puppy to sit and look at you (or cue it if not offered), and then release your puppy to take a break. Allow your puppy to sniff, potty if needed, and just walk and explore the world. Follow your puppy and capture any good behavior offered while walking - eye-contact, coming back to you, noticing something and not reacting, not picking something up off the ground after looking at it, etc.)
11. Then bring your puppy back to you and start another movement exercise for another short distance.

Trainer Tips

- 🐾 Always reward “check-ins” when your puppy looks up at you. Eye-contact and paying attention to you is fantastic and essential when walking!
- 🐾 Remember to also reward your puppy when she is right next to your leg when walking.
- 🐾 If your puppy resists and doesn’t follow you, stop. Wait, and continue to encourage her to come to you using a happy voice and encouraging sounds. You may even need to crouch down to her level to entice her to go to you. Then praise and reward her when she does.
- 🐾 If your puppy races ahead of you or out to the side and gets the end of the leash, stop. Wait for a moment to allow your puppy to wonder why you stopped. She may even look back at you (this is good and is your opportunity mark and reward eye-contact). Think of this as an orientation game on leash. Encourage your puppy to return to your side with verbal coaxing and inviting gestures (do not cue anything and **do not** use the word “come.” Save this for when you start teaching the recall). When she returns to you, mark and reward her and start walking again.
- 🐾 If your puppy chews on the leash, say your no reward marker and distract her attention elsewhere or trade her for a toy instead - you will need to work more on desensitizing her to the leash.

Movement Exercises and capturing and rewarding the behavior I want is my favorite technique to practice with puppies. I like allowing them to think and make decisions and learn what behaviors get rewarded, and what behaviors don't.

Lure and Reward

Sometimes your puppy is going to need some guidance. Outside is very distracting! Use Following a Lure to help your puppy with proper positioning, moving through turns, etc.

1. Start by holding the leash in one hand and with your puppy standing at your opposite side. With several treats in your dog-side hand, hold your baited hand right in front of your puppy's nose (within 1 inch of it). Start walking in your intended direction.
2. Every few seconds, say your Reward Marker and pop a small treat into your puppy's mouth from your baited hand right at your leg and praise her for walking along at your pace. You'll need to frequently reload your hand with treats from your pocket or treat

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pouch. If she pulls ahead or to the side, immediately stop, get her attention and then lure her back to your side and have her sit.

3. Then put the treat-loaded hand back in front of her nose and start walking again.
4. Practice for a good distance that is within your puppy's attention span and then release her out to sniff and explore and get some wiggles out. Then begin the exercise again.
5. Go a little bit farther every day that you practice. After at least a week or so of daily practice with lured walking. When she can walk along without pulling for several minutes, begin gradually increasing—over many daily training sessions—the number of steps you go in between treats so that your puppy is walking longer distances between rewards. Reward her every other step at first, then every 5 steps, then every 10, and so on.
6. Then, begin bringing your hand to your body in between the moments you treat your puppy - and make sure you catch her while she is still next to you to say your Reward Marker and give her a treat so you are reinforcing your puppy for staying at your side.
7. Eventually, you should be able to walk with your hand comfortably at your side. Reward good position and no pulling with attention and affection, and occasionally reaching into your pocket to grab a treat to reward your puppy. Give your puppy reinforcement for "check-ins." You will notice if you have been diligent with using your Reward Marker to reinforce good positioning, that when you say it, your puppy will turn to look at you!

Quick Tip:

- 🐾 It is easiest to use a treat pouch instead of stuffing your pockets with treats. My favorite style of treat pouch is one that straps around my waist instead of clips to my pants. That way, it is easy to use with jeans, shorts and sweats, you can carry everything in one place, and you don't have crumbs in your clothes that a puppy may find and chew holes in your pockets. Doggone Good, Premier, and PetSafe all make pouches with straps. They can be found at pet stores and online.



- 🐾 If you have a good back and balance and are strong enough, you can use carabiner clips to hook the leash to your belt or treat pouch strap. Now you can walk "hands free." This is a great option if you have an old habit of leash jerking, are using the clicker for training, or just want the additional freedom. Using the Sadie Leash with a clip makes it easy to get the leash at the right length for training and then you can unclip it for puppy breaks and sniffing rewards where you will want the full length of the leash to allow your puppy to potty, sniff and explore. The clip makes it possible to easily adjust lengths without having to unclip the leash

from your dog.

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Trainer Tips:

Walking and Breaks: To create good habits and expectations for you and your puppy, practice with short sessions of walking techniques and then release your puppy out for a break to be a puppy. WALK (WORK) > FUN > WALK (WORK) > FUN... this way you can minimize frustration because you are staying within your puppy's attention span and ability to focus and concentrate on appropriate walking behaviors, AND giving her additionally rewards of having fun sniffing and exploring and getting puppy wiggles out. It's a win win!

Focus for Everything: Cue focus a lot while walking, and reward your dog well. By cuing often, you will begin to create a habit in your dog to look at you. In addition, capture every time your dog looks at you on his own and Mark and reward that (treats by your leg). By doing this you will be able to cue leads, and capture more, creating a wonderful habit in your dog for "Checking in."

Use Your Release Cue: To keep it clear between work and fun, use your release cue to give your puppy a break. Start and stop every walking exercise with a sit and a look.

Rewards: Remember that rewards are not just food. Praise is important and a reward. Attention is a reward. Pets are rewards. More freedom is a reward. Sniffing is a reward. Utilize these to your advantage so you don't burn through food as fast. Remember:

Calm > Work > Fun = Success!!

Reinforcing Good Choices: Walk your dog on a shorter leash to begin with. Capture moments of good choices made by your dog - no pulling, eye contact often, walking near you, relaxed and calm... After a good session of your dog WORKING for you, release him to go sniff and be a dog and walk that way for a little while. Then have him return to your side (Finish cue) and have your dog work for you again and release after a job well done. By practicing this way your dog learns to work for the things he likes best, makes better decisions on his own, and becomes more attentive to you and enjoys working for you more. Over time the leash can get longer and longer, and if you've done your job right, your dog will choose you more and the environment less.

It About Time - Not Distance or Destination: Quality over quantity! Your goal with your puppy is to teach him about moving with you. It is about the amount of time, not the miles. Don't worry about getting from point A to point B. You can easily do walking exercises in your yard, in front of your house, etc.