



# Loose Leash Walking

## WHAT IS IT?

Dogs without sufficient exercise and stimulation can develop unwanted behaviors from boredom! Going for a walk with your dog is one of the best ways to strengthen your relationship and provide them physical and mental stimulation!

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## WHY DO DOGS PULL?

- \* **Dogs pull because they have learned that it works!** We unknowingly reinforce and reward this behavior by allowing them to pull us towards where they want to go. Keeping that in mind, our first step in obtaining a loose leash walk is to stop rewarding the pulling.
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## HOW TO TEACH "LOOSE LEASH WALKING"

- \* It is best to use a leather or nylon 4–6 foot leash with a regular flat collar or a head harness, such as a Gentle Leader. Bungee leashes, retractable leashes, and back-connecting harnesses actually encourage and promote pulling.
- \* Pick a side for your dog to consistently walk on, either the left or right, and a command for the walk. Popular commands include "Let's Go" "Walk" or "With Me."
- \* Sniff breaks and "Free" time are important opportunities that your dog should be able to enjoy while on a walk. Instead of giving these away for free, however, use them as a reward throughout the walk for your pup walking politely! You can also use the pace of your walk as a reward. If your pup is walking near your side, you can increase the pace of your walk for a short distance to reward them and make the walk a fun experience!

*(Continued)*



## Loose Leash Walking (*Continued*)

### "RED LIGHT / GREEN LIGHT"

#### Step 1

Give your pup about half of the leash length. Given them the command to start walking and begin treating them while they are in motion for walking near your side. Once you've treated your pup, bring the treat back up near your chest to encourage eye contact, and then treat again.

#### Step 2

If your dog pulls ahead, jumps up at you, or crisscrosses, the light turns "Red" and you must stop immediately!

#### Step 3

Lure them back to your side and ask them for a sit.

#### Step 4

Once they are in a sit, the light turns "Green," and you can continue on your walk. We do not treat them for having to sit—their reward is the ability to continue walking.

#### Step 5

Make sure to break up the structured walk with opportunities for them to sniff and explore.

### "ABOUT TURNS"

#### Step 1

Throughout your walks, whenever your pup pulls ahead on the leash, give them their walking command and immediately change direction.

#### Step 2

Walk a few feet in the opposite direction. You will then give your pup the walking command again and turn back around to go in the original direction.

#### Step 3

Repeat as often as needed.

#### Step 4

Make sure to break up your walk with opportunities for them to sniff and explore.