

Does Your Dog Pull On Leash?

It's not just your dog! It takes two to pull.

Dogs do not pull if there is no one dangling at the end of the leash! Both you *and* your dog need to break old habits.

"A Leash is to the Dog-Human connection like a seat-belt is to the car-driver connection. Both are safety devices and often mandated by law. Just as we never use a seat-belt to drive our car, we should not use a leash to "drive" our dogs. A leash allows us a safe and effective connection to our dogs in case of surprises, emergencies, or situations where attention is hard to get or keep."
- [Lisa Edwards, CPDT, CDBC](#)



Your dog pulls because someone, somewhere at some time, took a step when he put tension on the leash.

He pulls - because it works!



He continues to pull because it continues to be a rewarding experience. He pulls, and he gets to the car. He pulls and he gets to greet that other dog in class. He pulls and the neighbor lady across the street tells

him how lovely he is, even though he is now not JUST pulling but is also climbing up the front of her with his muddy dog paws, to which she replies, "it's ok, I don't mind!"



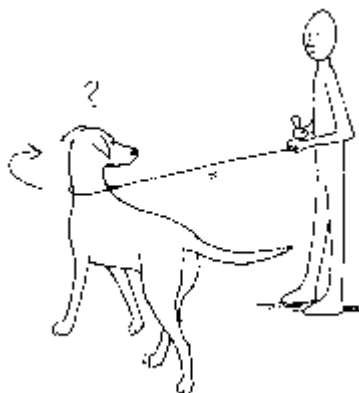
This is what loose leash walking looks like!

What gets rewarded, gets repeated.

Here is the elusive answer to the ever present question of HOW DO I TEACH MY DOG NOT TO PULL?? (Shhhhh - it's a secret!)

DON'T WALK FORWARD IF THERE IS TENSION ON THE LEASH.

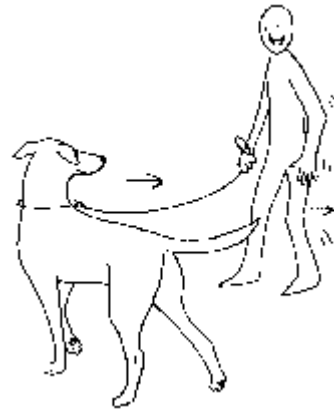
When the dog is about to apply ANY tension to the leash at all



Immediately stop.

Be a tree.

When the dog turns to see what happened to you, praise for his attention



and encourage the dog back into heel position next to you - if necessary, take a few steps backward.

As long as the dog is in the magic spot next to your leg, continue praising, give food rewards, make it the best possible place in the world to be. If he loses concentration and is about to put any tension on the leash at all, stop without warning and repeat the above sequence.



***GASP* Sounds way too simple doesn't it?**

Simply STOP every single time you note that the dog is about to put the slightest tension on the leash and the pulling will go away. (Yeah, right.) No, honest - It really, really works! The truth is, that if you tire your dog out first with a good game of fetch and then take him for a walk in a quiet non-distracting place every day this week with only ONE goal: to walk without tension and you absolutely refuse to take a single forward step when you feel tension on the leash, he will discover that pulling is "broken" and that the tension is a cue to slacken the lead. You will see the lightbulb go on when he realizes this. If you are consistent and don't give up, he will learn it. He will have good days and bad, but if you are diligent he will figure it out.



The other problem is that YOU want to get where you are going as much as your dog does.

Responding you your dog's pull has been rewarding to you, too. You are probably thinking right this instant: "How will I ever get to the car, the park, the house, by standing still for heaven's sake?"

First we must break YOUR habit!

It is as much an ingrained habit to you as it is your dog. He cues you to take that step by putting tension on the leash and you dutifully obey. He has trained you to respond and you are fluent in the art of following his lead. You do it without thinking. He pulls without thinking.

Be consistent.

Don't have a great training session and have super results and then mess it up and undo all the hard work you've done by allowing your dog to drag you to the car when you are late to class. You must never move forward when the leash is tight. Put all your supplies in the car first so you aren't juggling your purse, your training supplies and can concentrate on your dog. Do one step sit, one step sit, one step sit all the way to the car if necessary, but **DO NOT** allow your dog to drag you where he wants to go.

LET GO OF THAT LEASH - it will keep you from pulling!

Noooo that doesn't mean turn your dog loose to run in traffic, **TIE THE LEASH SECURELY TO YOUR WAIST OR STRONG BELT** or better yet, use a waist leash, and go hands-free. This will keep you from pulling. The only thing in your hand is your food reward or a favorite toy hidden in your pocket. These items will be delivered when the dog makes the right choice. If you "feel" your dog decide not to pull, **PRAISE AND REWARD** lavishly !!! Reward any lessening of the tension by proceeding forward. Deliver the reward at the seam of your pantleg as you step in next to your dog to reinforce that magic position.

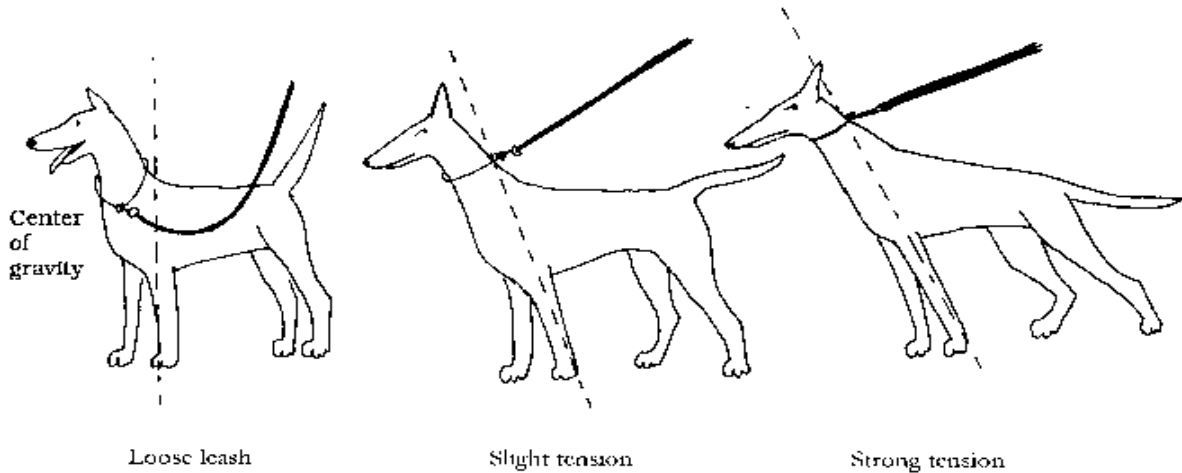


BACK AND TO THE RIGHT.

What if you stop and he just keeps pulling? Stop for a couple of seconds and wait, if your dog continues to strain like a maniac, turn abruptly and walk away from your dog (imagine you are facing 12 on the clock, you are going to turn and head for 4 o'clock.) The diagonal direction will set him off balance and he will turn toward you, as he catches up, **PRAISE** and deliver a treat in heel position - next to the seam of your pantleg. (This assumes that the dog is walking on your left side. If he is on your right, you will turn and head for 8 o'clock.) Then continue on your way.



**The first commandment of leash training:
DO NOT PROCEED FORWARD IF YOUR DOG IS APPLYING TENSION TO THE LEASH.**



**Don't give your dog anything to lean against.
The more tension you apply trying to hold your dog back,
the more he shifts his weight forward to compensate. KEEP THE LEASH SLACK!**