

pursues you, say "YES!" and "GOOD COME!" as you dole out those treats! Every come is a party!

9. **READ** the two attached articles. *Leash Laws & Rules of Leadership*

Leash Laws

If you ask any student in a puppy class, "What is your number one reason for being here?" the most frequent response is "I want my puppy to walk on a loose leash."

The truth is.....a good loose leash walk takes **time** and lots **and lots of practice**. Achieving a loose leash walk is more about your ***relationship*** with your dog, and less about training any specific skill.

The **first step** is to work on your relationship with your dog—get him focused happily on you by interacting with him many times a day.

- Acknowledge him with a big smile and some praise every time he approaches.
- Train him 50 times a day with 10 second interactions – "Good come" whenever he approaches, ask for a "sit" when he comes to watch you brush your teeth in the morning and praise enthusiastically as his butt is on the ground "GOOD SIT", etc.
- This creates a puppy who happily follows you around because you are interesting and he feels acknowledged. Isn't that what we all want from the people in our lives? Dogs are no different.

The **next step** is to understand that every time he is on lead, you are ***training***. If you take an "Oh, well, I'll just let him pull me now and deal with this later" attitude, it will not work. *You just trained him to pull, like it or not.* So don't take him for walks until he's doing better. Put him on lead and ***play*** – make it fun.....walk, turn, run a little bit, turn some more....all with LOTS of praise every time he joins you. Let him know that when he is on lead, it is all about his handler.

We'll give you some different ways to practice this in class, get you comfortable with the best way to hold the lead, coach you on standing up straight and ***moving*** so that you will be interesting to your pup and ***look*** like a leader.

We'll also teach you a fun and effective game you can play at home called "***choose to heel***." Some folks find this tremendously helpful. It is just one more "tool" in your tool box.

All of this, done enthusiastically and patiently every day will yield a puppy who will walk near you on a loose leash. It takes time, but the reward is worth it.

So, bearing in mind that this is a ***journey***, here are a couple of important things to remember:

1. A lead is a **safety belt**, not a communication device. It is there to keep your dog safe. A dog, no matter how well trained, should **never be off lead** when not in your house or in a safely fenced area.

2. **Do not pull your dog.** Would you like that? Pretend there is no lead – get your dog’s attention and invite him to join you. (Dog’s are predators—they respond to movement and high pitched sounds). Be interesting—create the **habit** of paying attention to you. Anytime you are ready to move, you should cheerfully get the dog’s attention with a, “Fido, let’s go!”

Exception: if your pup is “in someone’s face” or bugging another dog (either pestering or growling), **go ahead and PULL** (you have no chance of getting his attention)—don’t jerk the lead, just a fast firm steady pull, preferably on a 90 degree angle from his target, not straight back. THEN, as you gain distance, work to get his attention and reward with a big YES!

3. **Do not let your dog pull you.** EVER! If he starts to pull, freeze. Take a “Hey, goofy, remember me?” attitude. Be interesting, make some noise, and the second he looks at and/or moves toward you, say “yes!” or just smile and **reward him with forward movement.** That is what he is after, but he only gets it when he gives you a loose lead. Be goofy, make noise, move around. You can also snap the lead to make some noise to get his attention. Again, the second he looks, PRAISE, YES! Be goofy, and get moving. A Martingale collar (be sure it has a quick release) is useful here because the chain loop makes noise when you snap the lead.

Keep these 3 rules in mind every day. **Every time your pup is on lead, you are training,** like it or not. Don’t try walks down the street—boring. Take him out where you can change direction frequently and mix it up with fun stuff. Put some kibble in your pocket (always have some kibble in your pocket) as you take him out to potty, and when he is done, do a little “crazy walking” – changing directions and speed -- and making it fun with lots of praise when he looks at and moves **with** you. Give him a treat when he is near you. ***Next to you is the “happy place.”***

Practicing “choose to heel” every day for a couple minutes in the house or some other enclosed area will also accustom him to staying near you—**create the habit of following your lead.**

Time invested **now** in creating the habit of watching you and staying on a loose leash—whether it is 4 ft or 10—will yield a life time of enjoying your buddy.

One last bit of advice/warning: **adolescent dogs are like adolescent humans** – good manners and devotion to a parent can disappear for awhile. If all of a sudden your well-behaved puppy seems to have disappeared and been replaced by an imposter (this pup looks just like your puppy but where did his good manners and training go?), take heart. Maybe increase the time you spend with him. Do not yield on the rules, and just “hang in there.” It will get better.

There are some tools you can use – a Gentle Leader or a pinch collar – to help you through the tough times, but these are only tools, and they can cause problems used improperly. Talk to a trainer before you try these tools.