



# THE DOGGY DIGEST

## TRAINING TIPS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MUTTS WITH MANNERS

### Six Ways You May Be Sabotaging Your Dog's Loose Leash Training

The ancient war of tug between humans and canines can now be over. Here are six ways you may be inadvertently sabotaging your leash training with your dog.

**6. Exercise** - Leash walking is not exercise for your dog unless you are putting in 3-5 miles or 45-60 minutes. Some breeds and breed mixes may require more than this average.

Exercise your dog before an evening stroll with a game of fetch, tug, or train him to run on a treadmill. Exercise doesn't always have to be physical either. Consider exercising Fido's brain before a walk. Practice his leash walking skills in the driveway, and be okay if you never leave the driveway. Ultimately, what Fido wants, is to spend quality time with you.

**5. Boredom** - Fido, no matter how large or small, is a natural-born athlete. Unless you are running or walking at his pace, he is most likely bored, add to this that he has been hanging out at home all day waiting for you. Draining his excitement and enthusiasm before attempting to put a leash on him will be in your shoulder's best interest. All Fido wants to do when you get home is to go as fast as he can.

**4. Your goals are not Fido's goals** - If you have a goal or destination for your walk, ditch it immediately. The only goal you can have when you are loose-leash training Fido is a lot of stopping and sitting, changing directions every time he pulls (no matter how crazy you may look to your neighbors), or just going back to the house and practicing there.

**3. Fido pulls, you pull and we all pull back** - In this tug of war game, nobody wins. This antagonistic relationship has to stop. If Fido pulls on the leash, resist the urge to pull back. You both are contributing to the pulling issue. All this game produces is a tired arm, and potentially your dog a damaged trachea. A damaged trachea can shorten Fido's life.

**2. Consistency** - Let's get honest. In this busy life, sometimes you don't actually care if Fido is pulling you around. Sometimes, you actually do care, maybe even most of the time. And when it comes to training gear, I have seen people buy everything from a no-pull harness to a head collar, and the very same client will in desperation try choke collars and prong collars. This is terrible inconsistency and is not teaching your dog a thing. All Fido learns is that he can pull in any of these training tools. These are tools and not magic fairy dust. The magic fairy dust is all in the training and keeping it all positive is the only way to get true learning.

So fire all the negativity and burn the choke collars and prong collars and invest the time in training with Fido. He deserves it and your relationship probably needs it. The truth is you don't need punishment to effectively train Fido to walk nicely on a leash. Punishment never teaches anybody anything, and leash pops and collar corrections definitely don't.

So stay consistent with the tools you are using whether it is a no-pull harness or a head collar, and most importantly, stay consistent with Fido's training. If you invest 1-2 years of training with Fido when he first comes into your home, you will get rewarded in great dividends in the future years and not sacrifice an ounce of your relationship.

**1. Time in, Time out** - Have you ever really taken the time to teach Fido how to walk nicely on a leash? The more time you invest into Fido, the more likely Fido is to walk nicely on a leash. Dogs are not robots and have their moments of imperfection just like you do. Committing to daily or at least weekly training is so important for the first 1-2 years Fido is in your home. Fido is not trying to disrespect you, assume the alpha or dominant role, or blow you off when he is pulling on the leash. He simply is a great athlete and has to run to get his exercise. Consistent training and exercise is all it really takes.

It is not innate for dogs to walk nicely on a leash, and the heel position is an obedience trial requirement. When it comes to most human/dog relationships, a loose leash is all you need.

As a dog professional, I know how hard it is to train dogs to walk on a loose leash. Just because your family dog did it, or your last dog was amazing, doesn't mean that Fido will take to it as quickly. As I mentioned above, dogs are not robots. They are individuals and training should be suited to fit the individual.

Dog training takes thought and effort. Once you and Fido resolve the training issue, revisit these skills every once in a while to keep it fresh in Fido's mind.

**Until next time, keep it pawsitive!**