Stop your dog pulling on the lead

Well Heeled Dog Club
www.thedogclub.co.uk

Nothing takes more fun out of walking your dog than being dragged every inch of the way and having a sore shoulder to show for it.



So why do they pull us from pillar to post? Well they pull because they want to move forwards to see what's interesting ahead. Ok, so nothing too insightful there, but guess what, the very fact that we move forward when they pull, fully reinforces to the dog the value of pulling. So, whose fault is it that they learn to pull on the lead - you guessed it.

Many people will try all sorts of non-pull harnesses, extendable leads, slip leads and even choke chains in an attempt to discourage lead pulling. Apart from the obvious discomfort to dogs, unless you're using these devices as an interactive training aid then none of them will work for you long-term - you're much better off using reward-base techniques to encorage the dog to stay by your side.

What are the first steps?

If you can control the direction of the dog's head then the body will follow, so put your dog on a normal, well fitting colar (or half-check collar) and use a 5' lead. Alternatively, training leads allow you to fasten the lead around your waist or over one shoulder, allowing your body to take the strain of the pulling, rather than your arm.

If your dog is a strong and persistant puller then a GenCon all-in-one head collar & lead will be a worthwhile investment at this stage. Head collars work much in the same way as halters do for horses - your dog will need a little persuasion to get used to them but the results are fantastic.

Training leads & GenCons are available from the Well Heeled online shop: www.thedogclub.co.uk

Then What?

Now you have taken the strain out of walking, it's time to start the training. There is only one way to avoid reinforcing pulling on the lead and that is of course... not moving forward when they do. So when do you move forwards? Only when you have the attention of your dog and the lead is slack.



I call this method 'The traffic-light game'. A tight lead triggers a red light = STOP... Relaxed lead triggers a green light = GO.

If your dog is trying to pull and getting nowhere, it will soon stop and look back at you to see why you have stopped. The action of looking back will slacken the lead and the minute your dog catches your eye, say 'GOOD DOG' and start walking forward again. The second the lead goes tight, stop and repeat the process.

I know from practice, this takes perseverance, but it is worth it in the long run. Once your dog successfully walks without pulling on the lead, you can then start working on the heel command to teach your dog to walk along side of you.

If you would like any further help or information, please contact Mike Flannery:
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