

“ The good news is, Loose Leash Walking (LLW) is incredibly easy to teach. The bad news is, it's incredibly difficult to teach because you have to pay attention to the leash ALL THE TIME THE LEASH IS ON. Argh. Look on today as the first day of the rest of the dog's life. From now on, a tight leash will never, NEVER, NEVER go where the dog wants it to go. That single sentence is truly the key to teaching this behaviour. Go early to class. Go home from the dog park if you can't get to it on a loose leash. Be ready to take your time.

If you HAVE to go somewhere and you DON'T have time to get a loose leash, then think of something else:

- A. Give up the idea of getting a loose leash, or
- B. Put the dog on a halter or non-pull harness for times when you can't wait , or
- C. Carry her/him or
- D. Stick hot dogs in her face and let her nibble them all the way or  
Play tug all the way or h) — c'mon, your turn
- E.

Set yourself up right NOW for when time is tight. I will drag or be dragged out to the car if my kid has a broken leg, if the dog just swallowed a knife, or if my house is burning down. Otherwise, I'm not going anywhere with the leash tight.

Yes, your attitude is the most important factor in teaching Loose Leash. Now that we've got that settled, let's get started.” By Sue Ailsby

#### Stationary Attention

With your dog in front of you, have treats in one hand and your clicker in the other. Wait. The instant your dog looks up at your face, Yes&Treat (Y/T)or Click & Treat(C/T). Repeat this until your dog is instantly looking up at you. Repeat a few times per day for a few weeks. (Eye contact is the basis of any other behavior you may want to teach your dog, so don't skimp on this.)

Begin with the dog sitting directly in front of you; treats in your hand, leash very loosely held or tied to your waist. Start your session by backing up to ensure your dog is focused on you. Take a step or two backwards, the dog follows. You stop, she sits. You say “Yes Or Click” ( mark for correct behavior) and give a treat. Do this several times, making sure you don't bump into something as you walk backwards.

Now, begin to extend the behavior, walking back for several feet, before you stop and reward. After she's got this (it takes maybe 4 minutes) begin to teach her to walk beside you by beginning the behavior-walking backwards, than abruptly walking into your dog pushing her gently to your side. Take three or four steps and stop, she sits beside you, rather than in front, and you say “Yes” and treat. Begin this with mild distractions, until you get the hang of it. Pivot so that he is on your left and instantly c/t. Take a step or two and c/t. Repeat dozens of times, heavily reinforcing (using the list above) this new position.

Walk backwards, so that your dog follows you. After each step, c/t without stopping your backward movement. Don't lure him with your hands; otherwise he is only learning to follow your hands. Just move and he should follow.

Extend the walking, each time having her go further and further beside you. If she begins to forge ahead, quickly step backwards, she follow, move into her again, stop, sit, “Yes”. Treat Later when the behavior becomes reliable, add the cue. As you begin walking say “Let's go”, or “Let's walk” Use your left hand to feed. If your dog is on the left and you feed with your right

hand, he will move in front to get closer to the food hand and trip you.

If he dog goes ahead of you, start to move erratically, saying his name as you turn away from him. Be sure to NOT pop him on the collar when changing direction. Since he has found following you fun, he should stay with you.

Heavy-duty reinforcers to be used while LLW;

- \* Feeding five, ten or 50 treats – be unpredictable!
- \* Running around, encouraging the dog to chase you
- \* Making silly “whooshing” noises (agility people know what I mean)
- \* Petting gently/roughly
- \* Playing with a ball or tug toy (if you throw the ball, do it within leash range...ouch!)
- \* Letting him smell the treat, (no eating!)
- \* Showing the toy, (no playing!)
- \* Pointing to the ground, saying “go sniff” (if you allow the dog to sniff, you cease to be a barrier and they will sniff less)
- \* Plucking grass or snow and throwing it up in the air
- \* Clapping, cheering (dogs LOVE clapping!)
- \* Blowing bubble
- \* Giving access to SHEEP!, other activities – car rides, swimming, whatever he likes

This can be one of the most difficult things you will teach your dog. The fact is that whenever you have the dog attached to the leash and the leash is in your hand(s) the dog's attention should be, at least in part, on you. ALWAYS! This is a very difficult thing for many dogs because the environment is SO attractive. There are sights and sounds and scents which act as magnets to draw your dog's attention away from you. Your dog needs to learn that you are leading and it is following, not the opposite!

Use a Head Halter or Body Harness - If your dog is stronger than you, you need "power steering".

· By Sue Ailsby

### Walking with a Goal (WWAG)

Now it gets tougher. Give the dog a focal point — something she really wants to get to: a door, a large treat, a toy, another person, whatever. Put the focal point at one end of the longest area you have. Start at the other end of your long area, leash properly wrapped. Start walking slowly toward the focal point, clicking rapidly for a loose leash.

If the dog gets all the way to the focal point with the leash loose, she can have it/eat it/go through it/play with it/whatever. Then start again.

If she doesn't get all the way to it without tightening the leash, you back up. No, don't turn around, back up. Back up. Back up more. Back up until you're completely out of the focal point's "attraction zone", until the dog is barely remembering it's there. Click X10 for a loose leash, and start walking forward again.

As long as the leash is loose (remember, that means the snap is hanging straight down), you walk forward toward the focal point. As soon as the leash gets tight (that is, as soon as the snap moves, or as soon as you see the dog ABOUT to make it tight), back up as far as you need to so she loosens the leash and stops trying to get where she wanted to go.

Click X5 for a loose leash and start walking forward again.

Whether you click for a loose leash as you're walking forward or not is up to you. Some people think the explanation is clearer with clicking for a loose leash as they walk, others think the focal point getting closer and further away is best by itself. Your choice.

## Off Leash Heeling - Finding Heel

The Lesson is "My person's left side is the BEST place to be."

This MUST be done inside a fenced area.

Hold a tasty treat in your left hand at your left pant seam. It is the lure we will use to encourage the dog to find the right place

When your dog approaches to investigate mark the behavior ("Yes" or "Click") and let it take the treat.

Turn away from the dog and do the same again..... The dog has to find your left side.

As soon as it finds your left side it is rewarded and the rewarding place goes away so soon the dog is hurrying to catch up with you.

Walk in big circles and "8's" around the yard and the moment the dog finds your left side, mark, treat, turn and walk away. Now it's a moving game.

As the dog begins to find the treat more rapidly and accurately, take 1 to 2 steps with the dog at heel position before marking and treating.

Very gradually increase the distance you walk before marking and treating.

When you begin to have predictable success with the lure in place hold your **empty hand** in the target position, mark the heeling behavior and produce the treat from elsewhere on your body.

Don't "steer" your dog

IF you catch yourself applying tension to the leash out of habit tie the leash around your waist so your hands can not apply pressure. If you are steering there is no reason for your dog to pay attention to you..... he has tactile information (all the time) where you want him to be, so there's no reason to keep an eye on you!