

7 Easy Steps to Stop Leash Pulling by Your Dog

Tired of taking your 20 lb dog for a walk and feeling like your wrestling a team of sled dogs across Antarctica? Check out these 7 easy hacks to stop leash pulling and start enjoying your walk again.

Leash Pulling: Embarrassing And Dangerous

Nothing is better than being embarrassed AND in danger! It's like a double bonus of humiliation and edge of your seat adrenaline. That pretty well summed up our walks at my house.

Our obedience school dropout would dart ahead, dragging me behind like an empty can tied to a newlyweds bumper. Strangers would chuckle and say things like "Who's walking who?"

Ha ha, very funny.

Not so funny when you're trying to push a stroller or do anything else other than concentrate on keeping your balance. It also wasn't funny because our dog would pull so hard she would gag and choke. Something needed to change. I didn't want our dog to trot dog show style at my side, I just wanted our walks to be safe and manageable, and yes, a little less embarrassing.

What Causes Leash Pulling?

First stop, the Internet. There I was deluged with a bunch of theories on training dogs. Was she exerting dominance? Was it an expression of her disregard for me as pack leader? Or was she just really excited to get outside?

Who knows. I was at the point where I didn't really care, I just needed to fix the problem.

I was at the point where I would have even bargained with her: "Look. You can be the pack leader if that's what you really want. Can you just chill out in exchange?...Oh, and since you're the new leader, can you go to work this week and I'll stay home and sleep all day and dig through the bathroom trashcan? Deal?"

I didn't have time to devote to a dog training system or all the other stuff you read online. I just needed answers. So I dove in and did some serious trial and error. Here are the best solutions I found.

7 Steps to Stop Leash Pulling

1. **Chill out before you go out.** Our dog freaks when you even touch the leash. She starts spinning in circles and doing this funny dance. It's really funny and we kind of fed into it. The problem is she immediately takes that energy outside and goes pulling on the leash. Try to get your dog calm before you open the door. Put the leash on and wait a bit.
2. **Practice inside.** I know. That sounds dumb. It does help though. You can practice trying to get your dog to stay at your side. You can also practice going first through doors. I know the whole going first is tied to a dominance theory but you don't need to buy into that for it to be useful. The main thing is you are getting your dog to listen to you on the leash.
3. **No Pull Harness.** Not up for even trying to teach your dog anything? That's ok! We live in the 21st century where there's a product for everything! No pull harness are great! And they are a great place to start because you aren't going to fix the problem overnight. Plus, if your dog is like mine, it can be harmful to them to pull so hard on the leash. You can get one from [Amazon like this one](#), or go to any other pet store.

My Amazon Picks



ThunderLeash No-Pull Dog Leash, Black/Blue, ...
\$29.95

4. Stop When it Starts. This is the most commonly taught method to get your dog to stop pulling. It can also be the most time consuming and frustrating. Basically, you stop every time your dog pulls on the leash. Stand still until there is slack in the leash, praise your dog, and then move on. Not a bad method if you don't mind walking a block in 37 minutes.

5. Reverse Direction. I get a little crazy with the stopping and starting, so an alternate version is reversing direction. Every time your dog pulls, turn around and go the opposite direction. The trick is to do this without yanking on the leash. Be prepared for more strange looks from the neighbors.

6. Wear 'em Out. Sounds a little crazy, but this one really works. Ever notice how your dog pulls less at the end of your walk? That's because she's tired. Play a little or a lot with your dog before you hit the streets. Combine it with step 1 where you let your dog mellow after putting on the leash and you have a much slower walk.

7. No Rewards. At the heart of all dog training is the concept that behavior that is rewarded is repeated. Most of the time we don't even realize that we are rewarding behavior we want to discourage. When it comes to leash pulling, the reward is letting your dog get to what he's after. If he's pulling you to sniff a tree or mailbox, don't let him get there without stopping first. Dogs have short memories when it comes to action and reward, so you just need a slight interruption in the chain.

Things not to do? Never yank on the leash and don't yell at your dog. Yelling doesn't work. Trust me, I used to do it all the time. It was like me and my dog were speaking a different language....

Watch a Video on Leash Pulling

If you'd like to watch a video, check this out. I think it will help those that are still struggling. As you will see in the video, he does it without force.

The dog trainer in the video goes by [Doggy Dan](#). He has a website with over 250 training videos. Check it out:

[Click Here](#) to check out [Doggy Dan's](#) video training website.