

Bendigo Obedience Dog Club

PART 2

Training Tip 3; Pulling on Lead



Pulling on lead is such a common problem for dog owners, but is easy to fix IF we as owners are clear and consistent in communicating what it is we expect from our dog—walk nicely without pulling.

First, ask yourself: “What would I like him or her to do instead?” Instead of teaching a dog to *stop pulling*, think of it as teaching your dog how to *walk nicely beside you*.

Remember it’s all about the rewards.

One of the easiest and most effective ways to start teaching a dog to walk properly on a dog leash is to reward the dog for paying attention to you and for being in the desired position (next to you or close to you) when out for a walk.

Reinforce the behaviour we want and it will be offered again!

Begin teaching this inside the house on lead where they are more likely to pay attention and listen. Make sure the dog understands what is expected of it before moving to another area such as they back yard.

Becoming a Post

- When your dog starts to pull (that particular instant, not 10 steps further on), stop moving and become a “post”.
- Do not pull back on the lead, just hold your ground. Pulling back will cause the dog to pull forward more.
- Watch and wait...eventually your dog will shift it’s weight, move in another direction that will allow the lead to slacken (pressure of the pull is released).
- The first few times you stop and wait, your dog may stand there for quite a period of time—be patient and wait. Give your dog “thinking time”.
- Reward the dog for this action (taking the pressure of the lead) by moving again.
- Repeat the above steps. Over time, the dog will make the association of no pressure on the lead with moving.
- As the association is being made, you will notice that the “thinking time” needed by your dog is less and less.
- Consistency is the key—if you allow your dog to pull you along, even for a little bit, the dog will not understand and won’t learn that no pulling = moving.

Common mistakes that can be made using this method

- Pulling back on the lead
- Incorrect timing of reward or movement

To begin with, you may only get 1 or 2 steps in before you have to stop again and wait, but over time with repetition, you will find that this turns into 2 or 3, then 4 or 5 and will increase into longer and longer periods of your walk.

Remember: Be consistent in communicating the “rules” of a walk. If not pulling only applies sometimes, the dog will not understand that we want no pulling every time. If you repeat 10 times and then give up and allow the rest of the walk to be pulling—you are teaching your dog to try pulling more as it will eventually work.