










Loose Lead Walking

This is what you want your dog to do for most of the time when he is walking on his lead with you. However, before your dog does this you have to teach him to walk when the lead is loose because dogs naturally pull on leash for a number of different reasons. The owner usually reinforces pulling. Dogs pull because pulling works and they don't realise that not pulling works better. Remember that a dog's natural pace would be a lot faster than a human's so when you go for a walk the dog hits the end of the lead straight away and therefore, teaches himself to pull. Dogs also have an opposition reflex, so as soon as they feel pressure on their necks or chests they reflexively lean into it. It is therefore easier and more enjoyable to teach your dogs to walk on a loose lead before they become addicted to pulling! To teach your dogs to walk on a loose lead we:

-  Make sure the dog knows his name, to get your dog to follow you must be able to get his attention
-  Remember it takes two to have a leash tug-of-war. Your job is to make sure the lead is always loose. If you don't have time to always make sure the lead is loose use a head collar, don't undo all your work when you can't pay attention to your dog.
-  Remember, if there is tension on the leash, it means there isn't much attention from your dog, or from you.
-  Give your dog feedback in the form of praise for being beside you, food rewards for attention.
-  If your dog is pulling stop walking as walking itself is a major reward.
-  Change direction a lot, but DO NOT! Jerk his neck or make sudden changes, just turn slowly and call his name and come along, as soon as he catches up to you and walks close to you Click! and give him his treat.
-  For dogs that are already addicted to pulling use penalty yards, walk nicely to the bush, and you can sniff. Whoops! You pulled, let's walk back to the starting point and try again, the dog only gets its reward (sniffing the bush) if the lead is loose, don't reward for tight leads.