

SHERW^{PAW}D BARKS

DOG TRAINING AND DAYCARE

Imagine taking an afternoon stroll, enjoying the fresh air and birds chirping with your best friend. A nice expectation of most dog owners but not the reality. Fortunately, we can achieve this expectation with time, patience and commitment.

Being on leash, tethered by a collar or harness is a very foreign concept to a puppy but is required in the human world for safety. As far as the puppy is concerned, a leash is an annoying barrier that keeps them from what they want – open fields with trees and smells, rabbits, dogs across the street. A leash may also do the latter, stopping the puppy from fleeing a scary situation. Either way, leash walking and how it's handled may lead to sore hands, frustrated handlers and leash reactivity. At the end of the day, understanding that puppies are always thinking 'what's in it for me?' will go a long way. If the handler allows the dog to drag them to the park and then lets them run off leash. The dog has just been reinforced for dragging.

Simply Put: Q: Why do puppies pull? A: To get where they want to go, quickly.

Furthermore, handlers allow it.

Steps to a Loose Leash!

1. Pulling = stopping. You will not reinforce a tight leash by following the puppy and allowing them to drag you to where they want to go. Puppies will get to go where they want, but only on a loose leash. When the puppy releases tension, turn the other way and reward as you walk in the other direction!

Reward as the puppy passes your seam line. You may find yourself changing directions frequently. This is part of training and should be expected! Ensure you are not putting pressure on the leash, any tension on the leash is put there by the puppy. If you constantly pull your puppy, they have every right to pull you back.

2. Have a plan. Practice walking and rewarding, communicating with your puppy and handling your treats, clicker and leash. Ensure you have practiced in the house, in the back yard and on the driveway before venturing onto the sidewalk

3. Use a 6 – 8 ft leash to frequently let the leash out and give the puppy the 'Go Sniff!' cue. With the 6 ft radius, allow the puppy to go sniff and explore, as long as they're on a loose leash, they can go wherever they want on a sniff cue! Do not use a flexi-leash while training. If you feel your puppy may run off unexpectedly or you do not have control of your training exercise – do NOT use a flexi.

4. Train on both the left-hand and right-hand sides so your puppy is accustomed to walking on either side. This way you are prepared in case you need to put yourself between your puppy and a distraction (another dog, rabbit, person, busy road etc). Walks are about mental stimulation, stress relief and exploration – not exercise or socialization.

5. Ensure the puppy is always in sight and not cutting in behind you – for safety reasons!

6. The younger the puppy the shorter the walk. Do not expect your puppy to walk for long periods of time, set your puppy up for success with short, frequent walks. Go home while you're still successful, don't push it! We recommend 5 minutes per month of age of your puppy aka 15 minutes for a 3 month old puppy.

7. Communication is key! Staying connected with your puppy, talk to your puppy. Envision the leash does not exist and you have to keep your puppy with you with your words!

8. Take a hungry puppy! Feed meals while training on a walk. A hungry puppy will be more motivated to work for you than one with a full belly. Take extra special snacks to reward past extra exciting things like other dogs, rabbits, cars, etc.

9. Change directions frequently! Keep the walk interesting by allowing the puppy to sniff and explore. Then change directions! Walk in and out of trees, cars, turn in a few circles to the left then to the right. When your puppy never knows what you're up to next – they'll keep their eye on you! If you always walk in a straight line, the puppy is more likely to pull.

10. The better the puppy does, the more training you do and as the puppy's age increases, the longer you can walk the puppy.

11. Use a 25-50ft leash for exercise and 'Sniffari' walks! Allowing your puppy freedom of movement is extremely beneficial to their physical and emotional development. Using a long leash in an interesting area like a field or park allows your puppy to run, sniff, explore and make good decisions like checking in with you and recalls without the stress of being off leash. Cutting down frustration by meeting your puppy's needs

will make your training walks much more enjoyable. A few times a week, take your puppy out on a long leash and let them sniff! Reward them for checking in naturally and practice your recalls, rewarding when your puppy runs back into you. Your leash is used as insurance policy here and should be let loose to it's full length as long as you are not in a dangerous area.