

Heeling Problems

First Steps First

Stress – Fear - Behavior

There are several things you need to understand before you can teach a lunging, pulling dog that it needs to walk with you nicely.

Heeling vs Walking

It doesn't matter what you learned in obedience class. Heeling and Street Walking

Walking is a dance. You and your dog need to know the steps. You need to practice. It won't 'just happen' because you put your dog on a leash.

are two different things.

Heeling is a control exercises where your dog is highly focused on you, and waiting for your constant cues. Street walking is where you and your dog are relaxed and strolling along together. The problem arises when owners think of Street Walking as a passive exercise where they are attached to their dog by a

lead, and the dog is able to do whatever it wants, as long as it doesn't annoy the owner. The problem is, the owner doesn't TEACH the dog what they want, or give the dog time to LEARN. They just punish bad behavior.

This increases the dog's

frustration and the dog 'shuts off' and won't listen anymore. This creates a vicious cycle where both the dog and owner are frustrated.

Stress and Fear

Between 6 months and 13-15 months are in a serious fear stage. They are afraid of everything. Instead of enjoying a walk, they are always worried and stressed.

Learning



Dogs learn different than we learn. They cannot 'relate'. If they must wait quietly for a treat, that doesn't translate to walking quietly on a leash.

If you let your dog pull. It will pull. Instead, when your dog pulls make it stop, sit, and look at you. Don't 'micromanage' your dog, or punish it. Just wait. Your dog doesn't want to sit still. It wants something to happen. If it learns that nothing happens when it pulls then you are ½ way to having a calm, relaxed dog on a walk.

You must be consistent, even if it means you will only walk to the end of the driveway for a week – or two. The dog must learn that a tight leash means stop.

You need to ask yourself if your dog is afraid. Is it trying to 'get away' from invisible dangers? If so, stop walking your dog. You have a lifetime

to enjoy your dog. Give it a few months to grow out of this fear stage. Instead of walking on the street, practice walking in the back yard,

perfect your technique so you are ready to take it to the street.

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If your dog wants something and you give it to them, then you are reinforcing the behavior and your dog will try harder next time.

Deferment & Relaxation Behaviors

Who is in charge?

Dogs do not typically want to be the boss. But they do want their own way. Many people let their puppies bully them, because they are cute. Then they wonder why they have



a dog that bullies them.

A dog that drags you down the road is bullying you. It wants to go, and doesn't care if you are being hurt.

A deferment behavior is something that teaches a dog to look to you for instruction.

A dog must be taught deferment behaviors before walking.

- Sit-Stay-Wait for a treat
- Bring a ball
- Wait until I give a command before you can have your dinner.
- Wait at the door until I walk through.
- Put a treat on the ground and the dog cannot have it until you say 'yes'.
- The dog must wait quietly until you throw a ball
- A dog must be calm before you put a collar on, open the door, walk down the steps.
- A dog must sit quietly with its leash on for a command to get out of the car.
- A dog must wait at the car, by your side, until you tell him that it is okay to walk on.

One way we teach deferment behaviors and Relaxation on a walk is by stopping every 20' – 10 yards, depending on your dog. Set the distance by how

long your dog can walk without getting excited.

When you stop, do an obedience exercise. Make it simple at first. As your dog learns then make it harder and harder.

Keep working on this until your dog is 2 years old. This doesn't mean that you stop to text or facebook on your phone. You must be engaged and doing something with your dog.



Relaxation and Calm Behaviors

Dogs Learn Calm

Being calm and waiting is something dogs learn. They are not born being calm. In fact, a calm dog doesn't survive in the wild.



Dogs need to learn to be calm at home, then outside, then on a walk. Calm is a learned behavior. At first your dog will obey a down, then it will down and be calm, then it will lay down and relax.

The same thing happens on a walk. Each of these are a stage that you must pass through before your dog will walk quietly.

Calm is a lifestyle. It is something that starts when your dog wakes up, and continues until it goes to bed. You cannot let your dog run wild all day and then hope it

will be good just because you put a leash on.

Do Not Let People Pet Your Dog

Stranger Danger

Dogs are born belonging to a pack. Everything outside of that pack is dangerous.

We would not let a stranger touch our child because she is 'cute'. We wouldn't let a stranger take our wallet and look through it because 'they have one like it'.

We would not let a stranger touch our spouses face.

If a stranger tried then there would be consequences. And why don't we allow these behaviors? Because they don't feel good for the person who is being 'forced' to endure the attention of a stranger.

You are a cognitive adult who can think and reason. Your dog has a simple mind. They cannot reason or understand complex issues, like safe people and dangerous people.

Environmental Changes

Change things Up

How to Fix The Problem

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#1 Stress and Fear

You need to determine whether your dog is acting excited, hyper, etc because it is fearful. Is your dog normally nervous? If this is your problem then stop taking your dog for walks until you fix the anxiety issue.

#2 Bullying

Has your dog learned that you are easy to bully? What happens when your dog is pulling? If so then your dog is bullying you all day. Find the places where you give into the dog, and stop. When your dog pulls, stop walking. Every 10' stop and make your dog do a sit and 1 minute stay.

#3 Relaxation

Start teaching your dog to relax at home. A massage. Increase the time the dog is laying down quietly not 'doing its own thing.'

If you want a calm dog – train a dog to be calm.

How to Fix The Problem

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#4 Strangers

Teach your dog a 'greeting protocol' in your home, with people the dog likes. Have the dog sit at your side. The person bends down like a stranger would and gives the dog a treat. Then backs away.

This gives the dog a chance to 'learn' that strangers will not hurt it. But also, wait until the dog has grown out of fear stages.

#5 Friendly Dogs

Even if your dog is friendly, teach it to greet strange dogs and people politely. Make it wait until you give the command to say hello. And, if it won't be quiet then the greeting stops.

#6 Manners

Friendly dogs, Jerks, Pushy dogs, aggressive dogs. They all need to learn manners. A manner is a routine that is followed every time before they get what they want. It can be sit and wait, or wait for a command.

Dogs generalize and associate. That means that sit may mean sit in your house, but not when walking because you are in a different area.

Dogs who pull when on your street may not pull if you go to a park.

If you have a puller, a simple way to stop the behavior is to take the dog to a new area and 'don't let it get started'.

Your dog doesn't understand that things change because the leash is on. Rehearse obedience 1-2 minutes, every 30-60 minutes through the day.

My Dog Is Just Being Friendly

Stress and Anxiety

We put human emotions on dogs. When a human is 'active' they are usually having fun. But, a dog will normally sleep most of its day. It is only active when hunting or staying alive.

Dogs show stress different than humans.

This is why so many people are shocked when their friendly dog 'loses it' and attacks a person or dog.

When a dog is being friendly it bows. It puts its head low.

It sniffs butts. Dogs stand side-to-side.

When dogs are anxious they lunge, bark, pull(flee), refuse to walk, sniff the ground and ignore you(avoidance), wag its tail high and fast, and run.

We don't understand this because the dog 'appears' to be friendly with the person. But what is often happening is that the dog is trying to

appease the 'danger' before they are hurt.

They push into the stranger's leg. They curve their body. They put their head under the person's hand.

A friendly dog will sit at your hand and wag its tail slowly. It may reach out and sniff the person.

You would not tolerate a stranger walking up and talking to you, asking to come along with you, touching you. So why do you expect your dog to do that to other people?

My Dog is a Jerk

When all else fails

There is always that dog who has learned that it is bigger than you. Unless you use a prong collar, or head harness, it just won't listen.

A walk is no longer pleasant. It is a constant struggle. This has gone far beyond bullying.

You give treats to redirect the dog. It takes the treat and then takes off again. It ignores corrections. If you stop walking, it will pull you over. Nothing is working.

TIP #1 Do Nothing

There is nothing a dog like this hates more than doing nothing. I would drive this dog to a park, tie it to a tree, and facebook for 30 minutes – then go home.

At first the dog will bark, pull, lunge etc. But eventually (maybe weeks? months?) he will stop and relax. Then, untie him/her. If the dog starts being stupid then tie them back up.

You can practice this at home. Put the dog's collar on. Stand still for 10 – 30 seconds. Then take the dog's collar off and ignore the dog. Repeat it an hour later.

Don't Stress the

5%
[Pick the date]

Your dog is a wonderful companion 95% of the time. Do not let the 5% overshadow your love and enjoyment of the day.

A dog is a puppy until 2 years old. You should be training your dog until 2 years old. Everything is a training exercise.

Your dog will fail. It will blow the exercise. But don't stress. A failure is not the time to correct, but the time to teach.

Your dog is always learning from you. Every day, from morning to night, is an obedience lesson.

Your dog will behave on a Street Walk in the same way 'you allow' it to behave at home.

The only real problem is that your dog has no manners, and no stress coping skills.

The good news is that, in time, you can teach your dog both.

Put the dog in a car. Sit for 5 minutes. Then go back inside.

Put the dog in the car. Drive around the block. And then go home.

I would also feed this dog by hand. It would never again use a food bowl.



A jerk has learned to be a jerk. In some cases, it is because you don't believe in crates, corrections, and timeouts.

In other cases, it is because you start correcting before your dog understands what you want.

In some cases, the dog is big, you are not. So it bullies you.

Or, and this is common. You don't play with the dog. Not 'tossing a ball' but actually engaging with the dog and playing.

Don't worry about why. Instead, start 'in the home' to make changes.

TIP #2 Everything Good Comes From You

Start teaching the dog that everything good in life comes from you – when you are happy.

Increase the time spent obedience training. Make obedience a part of your lifestyle.

Your dog must work for its food. Each treat. Each handful of kibbles. It will never again receive 'free food'.



Increase your dog's exercise, training time, and play. But, if your dog starts acting like a Jerk the game ends. It goes to a crate for a time out. Or is put in a down-stay for a time out.

And nothing good happens until the dog is good again.

Consistency and determination will determine whether this works, or not.

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I Don't Have Time

I want to – but

This is the #1 complaint. There are several reasons. Work and extra activities. The family leaves all the dog chores and responsibility to one person.

Maybe you have a 3 hour dog but wanted a couch potato. (1, 2, & 3 Hour dog refers to how much time you must spend with the dog each day to keep it calm and obedient.)

It doesn't matter 'why' you don't have time. All that matters is that your dog is under 2 years old, and what you do now will affect the next 10-15 years of your life.

Re-arranging your lifestyle for a few months will have consequences, good and bad. You are against a dead line.

After 2 years old we can change a dog's behavior, but instead of weeks (2 – 20) it will take months, and even a year or two.

The Midnight Club Coping

You have a goal, but right now it seems impossible.

What do you do until your dog walks nicely?

The answer, 'Join the midnight club'. You are not alone. There are millions of dogs who cannot handle the stress of a walk when there are too many distractions.

While you are teaching coping skills, you may want to walk your dog late at night, or early in the morning. There are fewer distractions. It is an alternative to 'going crazy' while trying to teach your dog.

Strange Dogs & People

Reactive Dogs

In this case you need help. You have made mistakes that you are unaware of. Your dog has learned behaviors that you cannot handle. Don't give up. Don't rehome your dog.

Instead look for someone with a certification in dog training, or better, behavior modification. Not every trainer can help you. You need someone who can look at your dog and 'knows' the problem.

*Whatever you do –
don't give up.*

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