



LESSON: Foundations of Loose Leash Walking

Goal: Introduction to leash mechanics. Teach your pup to stay connected and follow your body language and verbal cue when walking.

- 1) **FACE TO FACE FOLLOWING** Begin by facing your dog. Anchor the leash to your belly button.
- 2) Say, "lets go" and take 1 step backwards.
- 3) When your dog follows with a loose leash, mark "yes" and reward at nose height.
- 4) Do not reward if your dog jumps. Re-set and start over.
- 5) Work on 1 step at a time up to 3 steps.

- 6) **SIDE BY SIDE FOLLOWING** Begin face to face and take one step back, then pivot 180 degrees so the dog is at your side, and you're both facing forward.
- 7) Have the hand closest to the dog pre-loaded with treats.
- 8) Establish focus/eye contact with your pup then say, "let's go" and take 1 step forward.
- 9) When the dog follows with a loose leash, mark "yes" and reward at your side.
- 10) Practice taking 1, 2, then three steps making sure to reward your dog at nose height to discourage jumping.
- 11) If at any point the dog loses connection and pulls, go back to 1 step.
- 12) **DISTRACTIONS** Once proficient with the above steps, practice walking outdoors the distance of 1-3 houses on the sidewalk. Begin with step 1 (face to face following) and work through to #11.
- 13) **LEVEL UP** Sign up for Maggie's Loose Leash Walking Intensive to take it to the next level.

Pro Tip: Remember, the leash is not a steering wheel. Loose leash walking is a two way street. Your dog doesn't pull you and you don't pull your dog. Allow the clip to dangle and the leash to maintain a nice J or U shape without any tension. Be patient and reward generously. Loose leash walking is a skill that takes time and practice.

Maggie Bixler
Maggiescanineconnection@gmail.com
785.633.4939