



BUILDING LOOSE LEASH WALKING SKILLS

Courteous Canine, Inc.

Results the FUN way!

Loose leash walking can be one of the most rewarding skills for you and your dog—it transforms daily walks into fun, relaxed outings! But achieving that smooth, easy stroll takes practice and patience. Here's a guide to help you and your pup succeed in learning this valuable skill.

1 Burn Off That Extra Energy First

Before diving into loose leash walking practice, it's important to **let your dog burn off some of their extra energy**. A tired dog is more likely to focus on learning and less likely to pull out of excitement or frustration.

- **Off-leash play**: If you have access to a safe, fenced area, letting your dog run and play freely can help release pent-up energy. A 10-15 minute off-leash play session can make a world of difference!
- **Use a flirt pole**: For those without access to an off-leash area, a flirt pole is a fun way to tire your dog out. This long stick with a toy attached allows you to mimic the movements of prey and get your dog running and chasing in short bursts. It's a great way to engage their mind and body before leash training!



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2️⃣ Start with a Long Line, Then Gradually Shorten

Using a **long line** at first can set your dog up for success when learning loose leash walking. Here's why:

- A long leash gives your dog **freedom to explore** and move, helping them feel less restricted. This reduces pulling out of frustration.
- As your dog gets the hang of staying near you, you can **gradually shorten the leash** over time, helping them transition to walking calmly on a regular 6-foot leash.

Start by practicing in a quiet, low-distraction area with a 10-15 foot leash. Allow your dog to walk freely, and **reward them with treats** when they stay near you or check in. Over time, you can shorten the leash as your dog becomes more comfortable walking with less space to roam.



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3 Use Verbal Cues and 180-Degree Turns

Teaching your dog to pay attention and move with you is key to loose leash walking. One of the best ways to do this is by using **verbal cues and 180-degree** turns to guide your dog back to your side before they reach the end of the leash.

- As you walk, keep an eye on your dog. When they start to get ahead of you or lose focus, use a **verbal cue like "this way"** and **turn 180 degrees** to head in the opposite direction. This encourages your dog to stay with you and anticipate your movements, rather than pulling ahead.
- Reward your dog when they move with you! Every time your dog follows your verbal cue and turns with you, give them a treat.

This method helps your dog learn that **staying close to you is rewarding** and that paying attention to where you're going keeps the walk fun and engaging.



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And most importantly, approach every session with patience and positivity. With consistency, your dog will learn that walking calmly by your side is just as fun as running ahead!

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