

Does Your Dog Take You for a Walk?

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The San Diego Humane Society and SPCA can help!
The following tips can help you enjoy daily strolls with your beloved pooch right by your side.

Don't "jerk" your dog (and yourself) around —
Choke chains and pinch/prong collars are no longer the tools of choice!

For years, the only suggestion many pet parents have heard for dogs that pull is to use a choke chain or prong collar, and apply force or "corrections" whenever the dog is doing something you don't like.



These methods rely on "teaching" your dog through force and intimidation, but who wants to base their relationship with "man's best friend" on pain? That's no way to create a relationship! Moreover, these harsh methods often don't work, and worse, they can lead to more serious behavior problems including aggression — and no one wants that!

OH, BUT THINGS HAVE CHANGED! The GREAT NEWS is that there are much better, more effective, scientifically-proven ways to train your dog. These "dog friendly" **positive reinforcement methods** are the choice of today's modern dog trainers.

These great new tools help stop leash pulling without hurting your pet: The SENSE-ation Harness and Gentle Leader Head Halter

They really work! The SENSE-ation Harness is a body harness that works off of certain pressure points to bring your dog's focus back to you, allowing you the perfect opportunity to reinforce/reward that focus.

The Gentle Leader Head Halter and similar types of collars fit around your dog's head and nose, working like a harness used on horses. It is *not* a muzzle and does not interfere with your dog's ability to pant, drink water, eat, etc.

The San Diego Humane Society and SPCA uses both of these great devices extensively in the training we do with our adoptable animals at the shelter, as well as participants in our public training programs. We sell both the SENSE-ation Harness and Gentle Leader Head Halters in our retail store and would be happy to show you how to fit them on your lucky dog!

The long term solution: Don't let pulling work

Dogs do what works for them. If your dog is allowed to move forward when he pulls, he has just learned that pulling works to get him where he wants to go, which pretty much guarantees he will keep doing the same thing.

Make the decision that pulling no longer works in your world. When your dog pulls, you should stop walking. Next, get your dog's attention by using a kissy sound or patting your leg, followed by saying "Yep!" the second your dog turns back toward you. Give him a food treat and then move forward again. You may only get as far as the driveway, but consider it a training session.

The time you put into training your dog now will come back to you ten-fold, It is a fantastic investment in your relationship with your dog and will allow you to have fun, stress-free walks in the future.

Be consistent. Start with baby steps. Always set your dog up for success. Lastly, be ready to reward your dog with high value treats and praise for each small achievement.

We can teach you how to do this the right way! Leash walking is one of the skills we teach in our training classes for both adult dogs and young puppies. If you would like to learn more about how to teach your dog to walk nicely on-leash, we highly recommend enrolling in our Leash Walking Workshop. This two-hour workshop will teach you the skills and tricks needed in order to teach your dog the fine art of loose leash walking.

Remember, there is a pet-friendly solution to every pet behavior challenge, and the San Diego Humane Society and SPCA's team of certified trainers can help!

The San Diego Humane Society and SPCA offers lots of great training classes and resources for pet parents, including a FREE Pet Behavior Helpline as well as affordable, fun and effective training classes.

FREE Pet Behavior Helpline: (619) 299-7012, ext 2244

Call us for an "animal and people friendly" solution to your pet behavior question today!