

Connected Walking

Level 1: Move into leash pressure

Purpose:

Dog turns **into** the pressure of the leash rather than pulling more (opposition reflex). Because opposition reflex is an instinctual behaviour, turning INTO pressure must be taught slowly and must be highly reinforced!

Dog learns to keep moving until the pressure is released; dog learns that featherweight pressure on the leash is a cue to pay attention to; handler learns to use pressure as a cue (vs hauling the dog around)

Dog Skills

Self control
Respond to a cue
Give attention

People Skills

Reinforcement
Cueing
Feather Touch

Steps:

1. Handler sitting, very quiet location
2. Apply pressure against the leash (light feather touch).
3. Break
4. The INSTANT the dog relieves the pressure, c/t.
5. Practice for 5 minutes applying pressure in 5 different directions.
6. Repeat using a treat or treat container in the direction of the pressure.
7. The INSTANT the dog relieves the pressure, c/t with a treat FROM the container (this is basic It's Yer Choice)
8. When the dog 'is consistently moving INTO pressure, continue the pressure by moving your hand. Want the dog to move about twice as far as they did the first time.
9. The INSTANT the dog moves twice as far to relieve the pressure, c/t.
10. Practice for 5 minutes applying pressure in 5 different directions...moving the dog a bit more each time if you can—but remember that you are NOT dragging them, you are applying feather weight pressure!
11. Break and repeat
12. Still in a very quiet location, apply pressure against the leash and as the dog moves, continue the pressure by moving your hand in a small circle
13. The INSTANT the dog starts to turn to relieve the pressure, c/t.
14. Practice for 5 minutes applying pressure in 5 different circles, different directions each time.

Click Points

Release of pressure
Attention to handler

Good for developing these other behaviours:

Polite walking Levels 2 – 4; teaches the dog to move INTO leash pressure, rather than instinctually pulling against it, exploring and forging ahead.

At home fun:

Practice indoors or at home with minimal distractions, multiple times per day

Trouble shooting!!!!

1. My dog doesn't release the pressure:
 - a. Slightly and rapidly vibrate your hand (do not apply additional pressure—just make it inconsistent). Your fingers shouldn't be moving 'any further distance that the heart of a chick moves when beating' (Shirley Chong)
 - b. Wait while vibrating; for dogs who have been pulling for months or years, it may take awhile for them to re-calibrate what they need to respond to.
2. My dog doesn't care about the treats:
 - a. Get better treats OR make the environment less interesting
3. My dog stares at me:
 - a. Continue to vibrate and wait for the dog to take a deeper breath, shift weight or shift their eyes....anything.
4. I keep dragging the dog
 - a. Take a raw egg, hold it in the leash hand and let the leash run over the egg. Applying too much pressure will break that egg—the dog may enjoy the egg....it's YOUR fault it broke!