

WALKS THAT FEEL GOOD FOR EVERYONE



DID YOU KNOW?

Dogs naturally walk faster than people and they like (and need) to stop and sniff. Many dogs pull on the lead. With time and gentle training, most can learn to walk calmly on a loose lead, making walks safer and more enjoyable for everyone. It takes time and practice. Learning at home first works best.

Choosing the right equipment and teaching loose lead walking helps:

- ✓ Prevent injuries.
- ✓ Reduce stress.
- ✓ Make walks feel nicer for both you and your dog.

WHY HARNESSSES ARE SAFER THAN COLLARS

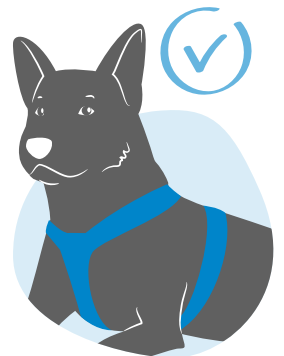
- Collars sit around the neck.
- When a dog pulls, pressure is placed on the neck and throat, which can cause pain and injury, especially in dogs with short faces or long necks.¹



Harnesses are safer because they:¹

- Spread pressure across the chest and shoulders instead of the neck.
- Reduce the risk of injury if you stop quickly.
- Allow dogs to move, turn and stop more comfortably.
- Harnesses also help prevent escape.

Dogs can easily slip out of collars, while harnesses sit more securely around the shoulders.



HOW TO CHOOSE AND FIT A HARNESS

Choose a harness that:

- Allows free shoulder movement.
- Does not rub or hurt the skin.
- Check the fit regularly, especially for puppies who are still growing.¹



INTRODUCING A HARNESS

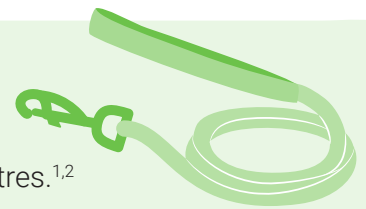
Go slowly and keep it positive:

- Pair the harness with treats or food.
- Practise short sessions at home first (inside, then in the front yard).
- Start going on walks only once your dog is comfortable.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT LEAD

- Use a strong lead in good condition.
- Check clips regularly.
- Avoid thin or flimsy leads.
- A good length is 2–4 metres.^{1,2}

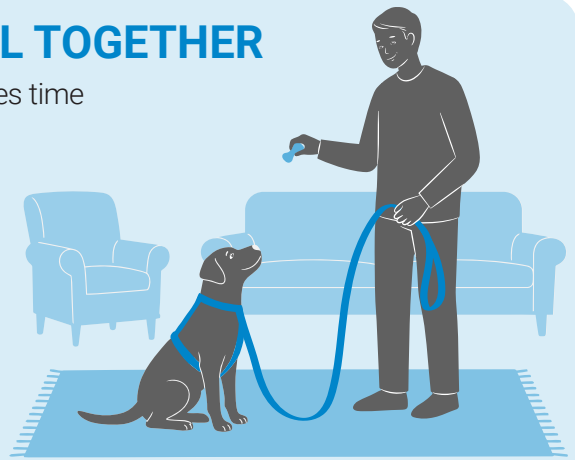


LOOSE LEAD WALKING: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Loose lead walking means walking on a lead *without pulling*. It takes time and practice. Learning at home first works best.

Tips to get started:

- Put your dog's lead and harness on.
- Try to take a few steps.
- Reward your dog for checking in to build your connection.
 - This may look like them gazing up at you.
- Reward them by dropping treats on the ground or offering something that takes a while to have a good lick or chew on (like pieces of chewy or crunchy foods).
 - When it takes a longer time to enjoy the treat you give, your dog will have a better chance to slow down and relax.
- Build up to walking a few steps together without pulling, then continue giving treats/crunchy pieces of food for your dog to enjoy again.
- If your dog pulls, stop walking.
- When the lead is loose, start walking again (and repeat)².



! Please note:

Walking is not right for every dog, and that's okay. If you are not able to walk your dog, or your dog is not coping, see our handout "**More than Walks**" for alternatives like visiting a sniff space, world watching and sniff-a-thons.

EQUIPMENT TO AVOID

There is no quick fix when teaching a dog to walk on a lead.

Check chains and prong collars do not address the underlying reason a dog pulls. They cause pain, fear, and injury and can make walking problems worse. These may soon be illegal in NSW.

Head collars (haltis) can be uncomfortable or scary for many dogs. They also require careful training to avoid stress or neck injury. Dogs also need freedom to sniff during walks, and pressure on the sensitive bridge of the nose can be unpleasant. For strong pullers, a front-attach harness is often a better option.²

Avoid retractable leads! They are dangerous: dogs can quickly reach roads, people or other dogs, and serious injuries to both dogs and people have occurred.



INSTEAD:

- Get help from a trainer who uses positive reinforcement.
- Focus on building your relationship with your dog.
- Think about *why* your dog is pulling.
- Help your dog feel safe.

Choosing the right equipment and investing time in gentle training help keep your dog safe and happy. With time, practice, and treats, walks can be calm and enjoyable for everyone.