



## **PULLING ON THE LEAD**

This is one of the most common enquiries we get when people want to join our training classes. Yes, there is training that can be done to teach your dog to walk loosely on a lead, or even a heel if you wish for that. Though just remember the walk is meant to be for the dog, so a heel is best used for short distances only (such as walking past a fence running dog).

Like us, dogs have their own preferred pace of walking. The pace will vary according to the dog's breed, age and excitement level. Dogs also have 4 legs, and we only 2. Its natural that most dogs pace will be faster than ours!

### **So why do dogs pull on the lead?**

One reason may in fact be a behaviour rather than a training issue. If your dog is anxious, highly strung or reactive they may need help from a behaviour vet first. Training may help; but if there is an underlying anxiety then this is best addressed first. Especially if your dog growls, lunges or barks on the lead.

Have you attended or tried early training? Early training for walking on the lead will focus on small areas; not just a long walk down the path. Think about practicing in the back yard, before progressing to the front yard etc. And for puppies and young dogs taking them to classes where they are around other dogs is invaluable.

Have you got the right equipment? A harness is safer and more comfortable for your dog. Discomfort from a collar or chain may in fact worsen pulling and cause damage to your dog. Where its appropriate it may also be suitable to use a long lead. This will allow your dog to wander, explore and sniff.

Did you know the dogs highlight of the walk is sniffing! And sniffing wears them out much faster too. 20 minutes of sniffing is equivalent to over an hour of walking alone.

Have you got the right attitude? If you are constantly telling them 'No' why would they want to walk with you? Take it easy and enjoy the walk. Take your time and don't rush the walk.

Do you allow your dog to pull you to what they want? If so then you are probably reinforcing the pulling behaviour. If pulling occurs try using the S.T.O.P program.

**Stop when your dog pulls**

**Take time to assess why they are pulling**

**Opt for a different direction or route if heading in the same direction is not working.**

**Pay your dog well! Give lots of verbal reinforcement and treats when they get it right.**

**When your dog is walking nicely then allow them to go smell things. Carry treats or a toy to reward them & use your voice to praise.**