

Balking on Leash

The first time you put a new pup on leash, some will pull and some will balk, meaning they won't want to move at all. The first time you restrain your dog its first instinct will be to escape, so how you handle this initial experience will dictate the behaviours that follow. This problem is not uncommon. It's a fear based problem and if handled aversively can turn the leash into a fear trigger making the problem worse. However, once your dog realizes how fun it is to go for a walk the fear will quickly dissipate.

It's really important to keep a loose leash at all times because as soon as the leash goes tight your dog will resist even more. If the leash goes tight, loosen up immediately and try one of the following options:

Techniques

- Carry your pup to the sidewalk then put it down allowing it to walk back to your house. Pick it up again carrying it a bit further down the sidewalk and repeat. Move further from the house each time before putting your pup down. It won't be long before the light bulb goes on and it starts to enjoy the walk. At this point you can walk right past your house and keep going.
- Take one of your dog's favourite toys with you, a squeaky toy or toy with feathers or fur usually works best. If your dog likes to retrieve take along its favourite retrieval toy. When your dog balks, squeak the squeaker, tickle its nose with the feathers or fur or roll the ball ahead of you.



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- Take aromatic treats out with you. Toss one ahead of you and let your dog run ahead to get it. Toss the next one a bit further and so on until your dog forgets about going home.
- Have a friend or family member drive you and your pup to a location where your house is out of sight. Get out and begin your walk there.
- In some cases a dog will balk because it realizes it will get attention. Attention is one of the most potent rewards you can give your dog. If this is the case, go for a walk when you're not in a hurry. When your dog balks, sit down beside it and wait quietly without paying any attention to it. When it attempts to walk in the right direction get up and walk with it telling it what a good dog it is. If it tries to head back home sit back down, ignore him and wait.