

BOUND ANGELS

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10 Tips for Dog Walkers

This is a guide to help shelter volunteers better socialize dogs through walks and social interaction. Other dog walkers and dog owners can use these tips as well. The key to walking a dog is a positive bonding experience between you and your dog as well as teaching your dog how to relate to the outside world. It should be a fun experience for both you and your dog, but also a learning one.

There are few things worse than a dog that has to sniff every person or dog they see, a dog that constantly stops to mark or one that pulls obsessively on the leash. I suggest a choke type collar at all times for the sake of safety and control of the dog. I do not like harnesses unless it is on a very old or frail dog (the rarest of exceptions).

If you are walking dogs at your local shelter, you have a great opportunity to teach a dog a skill that will make him more adoptable. You should take this responsibility seriously, it may be the difference between a dog that gets a permanent home and one that doesn't.

1. Do not open the gate, crate or kennel door until the dog sits calmly. If the dog jumps up and tries to get out, close the door firmly. Do not fight with the dog to get his leash on him.
2. Reward the dog when he sits calmly with a vocal reward (GOOD, YES, NICE), then attach the leash to his collar, or slip the noose over his head and move out. Move past other kennels without stopping.
3. Walk through thresholds and doors ahead of the dog.
4. If the dog forges ahead of you, turn 180 degrees and start again.
5. Your dog should walk on a loose leash. I recommend keeping 2 "bellies" in the leash. If the dog pulls tight on his, I drop mine and make a 180 degree turn and correct the dog with the leash. Periodically stop abruptly on your walk and see if the dog pays attention to you and stops as well.
6. Don't allow your dog to sniff excessively and "mark" on everything. Stop when *you* decide and say, "Go potty, good potty." We don't want to encourage a dog to become obsessive about marking and or stopping - keep him moving.
7. Always keep treats with you and reward the dog for keeping a loose leash and looking at you.

8. Practice walking your dog past other dogs and people. He doesn't have to meet everyone he passes.
9. If your dog lunges at another dog or person (playfully or dominantly), correct him with a firm NO and a pop on the leash. Your dog meets people and dogs on your terms, not his. A playful dog can put himself at risk by "trying to play" with a dog that may have an issue with other dogs.
10. At the end of your walk, reward your dog with praise and treats and possibly a chew toy / bone when you return him to his crate / kennel. Always end on a positive note.

Dog training has inherent risks. I urge you to research and consult a professional for training advice.

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