



## Walking on a loose leash with the gentle leader® headcollar

Training a new puppy or dog to walk on a leash can be a tricky situation if the dog has never walked on one before. It is important for them to get accustomed to wearing a collar, harness, or headcollar first before attempting to walk with them on a leash. Make it fun by using kibble or treats! ☺ You should also train your dog to walk loosely on the leash because the leash, itself, signifies control. Any tension on the leash represents a struggle for control. As soon as the dog pulls on the leash, he takes over control and becomes the “leader” with you becoming the follower. The Gentle Leader® is a great tool to help your dog make the transition to walking on a loose leash, and it is preferred to traditional collars by many trainers, veterinarians, and behaviorist.

The Gentle Leader® is NOT a muzzle! When fitted properly, your dog can still open his mouth to eat, drink, pant, fetch, and bark - except when you pull on the leash to close his mouth. The Gentle Leader® stops pulling and lunging, prevents jumping, controls barking and begging, and can also help manage other behavior problems. It consists of two soft nylon straps: the nose loop fits loosely and comfortably around your dog’s muzzle., and the neck strap fits high on the back of the neck. Like a halter on a horse, it enables you to guide your dog’s nose and head, giving you more control over the dog with less physical strength. The design applies pressure to the back of the neck rather than the front of the throat, which reduces your dog’s drive to pull forward and, as a result, eliminates any choking. Overall, the Gentle Leader® is more humane than the correction collar because it requires less forceful corrections.

The Gentle Leader® needs to be adjusted before you put it on your dog for the first time. The proper fit is very important in making your dog’s experience with the Gentle Leader® a pleasant one, and also eliminates unnecessary problems such as excessive pawing, rubbing and resistance, or chafing of the nose. Visit [www.gentleleader.com](http://www.gentleleader.com) for an in-depth description on how to fit it properly.



Fig. E-1



Fig. E-2



Fig. F-1



Fig. F-2

YES



NO



When properly fitted and viewed from the side, Gentle Leader® will resemble a “V” for “Victory”!, not an “L” for “Loser”.

Helpful hints on introducing the Gentle Leader® to your dog:

1. Start the first day the puppy/dog is home!
2. Use food rewards, toys and games to make a positive association to wearing the headcollar.
3. Week one: Offer the dog a treat through the nose loop. While the dog is chewing, buckle the neck strap. Continue to feed the dog a few treats, and then take the gentle leader off. This can also be practiced at meal times - offer a piece of food through the nose loop, close the neck strap, and let the dog eat with the gentle leader on. As soon as he has finished his meal, take the gentle leader off.
4. Week two: At mealtimes, take some food in your hand, put the gentle leader on as described above, then use the other pieces to lure the dog around, feeding him a treat every few steps. If he fusses, try to distract him with food. Gradually increase the distance the dog can walk while wearing the headcollar without fussing! From this stage on you can substitute the dog's food for his favorite toy.
5. Week three: Attach the leash to the control ring on the headcollar. Holding the other end, encourage the dog to follow you for a short walk outside I your yard or on a quiet street. At first, let the dog lead the way, just keep him nice and loose as you follow him (feel free to use lures again!). Once he is okay with walking with you with the leash attached to the headcollar, you can start using it to very gently guide him in the direction you want him to go. From this point on, use the headcollar every time you take the dog out for a walk or into public areas.

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE\***

- Never take the gentle leader off of your dog while he is fussing with it! This only reinforces the behavior, and the dog will learn that fussing with it will get you to take it off of him. Instead, wait for the dog to settle down (even for one second!) and then take it off.

- Also, remember to make training with the Gentle Leader® fun for you *and* your dog by using various treats, toys, and games!! Good luck! ☺

References:

Information and pictures taken with permission from [www.gentleleader.com](http://www.gentleleader.com)

Helpful hints are from Canine Companions for Independence Northeast Regional Training Center