

The Dance Dissected

## Loose Leash Walking

KIKI YABLON, MA, KPA-CTP, CPDT-KA



## What Is Loose Leash Walking?

- Takes a long time to teach
- Poorly defined—often by what the leash is doing
- Often defined by "don'ts"
- Many skills, eternally recombined in ever-changing environment



JO LOCK, @GAMMATHETRIPOD, ANDREA POLLOCK, @MOXIEMAEED, @TARO.THEDOCKAPOD, @TS-JAROD, SHELLY WOOD, SARAH OWINGS

## My Definition: Dog End of the Leash

- Frequent offered attention
- Walking or trotting at distance/pace that lets my elbow remain bent/spine aligned
- Changing sides predictably
- Walking closer or faster occasionally by request
- Slow when I slow
- Stop when I stop, at certain environmental cues, or when I ask
- Move in the direction of leash tension
- Sniff what you like if safe
- Calmly watching or ignoring people and other dogs
- Reorient after a "distraction"
- Step over the leash

## My Definition: Human End of the Leash

- Attention on the dog
- Manage leash unobtrusively
- Keep tension off the leash
- Keep the leash between person and the dog
- Slow when they slow, if safe
- Stop when they stop, if safe
- Let them sniff
- Give clear signals about direction
- Deliver or facilitate access to reinforcers
- Keep dog safe

## What Skills Does the Dog Need?

- Collect the reinforcer
- Offer attention
  - Reorient
- Walk, trot
- Slow down
- Speed up
- Settle
- Follow a hand target
- Come back to side
- Step over leash
- Switch sides
- Go off path
- Wait
- Follow leash tension

## What Skills Does the Human Need?

- Observation skills
- Gear arrangement
- Marking, if using
- Reinforcer delivery
  - Mechanical skills
  - Treat placement
- Leash handling skills

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## Setting Up for Success

- We say it a lot—what does it mean here?
- Antecedent arrangement: right behavior easy
- Number one for me: a longer leash
- If you were doing it on purpose, how would you set things up to teach a dog to pull?



KELLY LEE

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## Why a Longer Leash

- On a shorter leash, a lot of this would be pulling.



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## How Long is Longer?

- 8-15 feet for city walks
- 15-20 for hikes
- YMMV



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## Why a Longer Leash?

- Allows more comfortable gait for human and dog
- Less reason to pull
- Dogs on longer leashes (5 m) spent 2-3x more time sniffing than those on a shorter leash (1.5 m)
- Sniffing was correlated with lower pulse rate.
- True whether they were walked every day, and whether they pulled on leash normally



CRISTINA & AURÉLIE BUZINSKI, [HTTP://WWW.DOGFIELDSTUDY.COM/](http://www.dogfieldstudy.com/)

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## What Abouts

- "Reactive" dogs:
  - Tension on the leash might make it harder for the dog to turn around
  - Tension on the leash seems to push dogs "off the fence" in the wrong direction when they are already tense
- Some dogs seem to take food more readily on a slack leash
- Good leash management skills and selection of walking environment needed
- Pica, poop eating, etc.:
- Dogs who don't walk that far away
- Multiple dogs



ERIC GILBERT, "ONE GREAT SNARK," [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/MSR090Z2K08](https://youtu.be/MSR090Z2K08)

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## Other Ways to Set Up for Success

- Let the dog acclimate to the working area first
- Work on distractions separately—standing still, even
- Preteach component skills

## Not Just What Behavior: What ABCs?

CUES	BEHAVIOR	REINFORCERS
Marker	Collect reinforcer	Food, play
Handler standing still, slack leash, tight leash, "distractions"	Orient	Food, forward movement
Verbal cue, handler movement	Walk at a particular pace	Food, forward movement
Investigation ends	Orient	Food, forward movement
Leash tension	Slow down, come back	Food, forward movement
Extended flat or palm presented and moving	Follow/touch target to come back to side, step over leash,	Food, forward movement
Verbal cue, curb, elevator doors open	Come to/stop at side	Food, forward movement, other cues
Stop walking, step off path, lower arms	Sit, stand, or lie down in place	Food, forward movement

## For Humans Too

CUES	BEHAVIOR	REINFORCERS
Leash below dog's chest	Gather leash	"Smile" shape in leash, tangle avoided
Leash taut, distraction OK to investigate	Let a loop of leash out	Tension avoided
Leash taut, distraction off limits	Stop moving, put slack in leash	Dog orients
Leash on wrong side of dog	Flip leash over dog's back	Tangle/triangle avoided, dog in position to move forward
Need to turn around	Step backward with foot opposite side from dog	Dog stays on "correct" side as you turn
Thinking of a particular behavior you want after consumption	Deliver reinforcer strategically	Dog in position to do what you want next, further from a distraction, etc.



## Effective Sequences

- Behaviors should be fluent
- Behaviors should be on cue
- Cues should be timed like reinforcers

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## Collect the Reinforcer

- Teaching the reinforcement process first
- Owner found marking verbally or clicking difficult
- Tossed treats when dog wasn't looking



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## Offered Attention

- For some dogs, you'll be 50% of the way there with offered attention and a longer leash



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## Reorient After Investigation

- Treats represent things to investigate
- Treating to ground may increase reinforcer value
- Treat delivery and moving ahead sets up next rep



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## Building Attention Into Movement



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## Putting Movement on Cue

- Build reinforcement history for eye contact, then move so the dog moves to give you eye contact
- Make movement contingent on eye contact
- Add verbal cue



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## Using Multiple Reinforcers

- Vary what happens when the dog orients



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## Using Alternative Reinforcers

- Tug on the leash was more fun than food, so . . .



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## Taking It Outside



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**Building Duration**



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**Reorient After Investigation**



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**Reorient After Investigation**



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## Transitioning to Naturally Occuring Reinforcers



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## Distractions: More Cues for Attention

- Marking for just looking, hearing, etc.
- Simple pairing
- Consider treat placement
- Start without walking—work distraction separate from distance, duration, precision, etc



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## Pay Attention to Specific Cues

- E.g, not just "people"



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## Wait

- Verbal cues
- Other cues (dropped leash, in my other presentation this week)
- Taught by stimulus pairing



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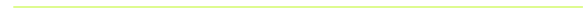
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## Sniff



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## This Way



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## Leash Handling Skills

- How to hold leash
- How to hold clicker, if using
- Where to wear treats
- How many treats to put in the bag
- Clicker mechanics
- Keeping a "J" or "smile" in the leash
- Keeping leash between dog and handler
- The twirl, the flip, and other dance moves
- Leash gathering
- Treat placement

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## Getting Organized



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## Treat Delivery



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### Treat Delivery



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### Treat Delivery



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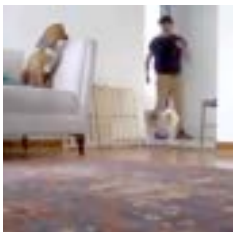
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### Keeping the Leash Between Dog and Handler



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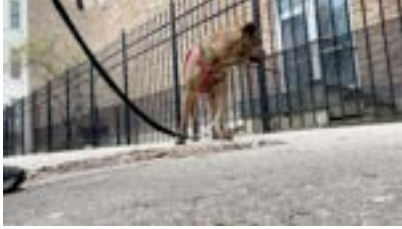
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## Turning Without Tangling



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## Managing Leash Length



HIT MIKE SHIKASHO, GRISHA STEWART

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## Managing Leash Length



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## Turn it Into an Attention Cue!



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## Extend It Into a U-turn!



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## When the Leash Goes Tight

- Do I want the leash to go tight?
- Will the leash inevitably go tight?
  - Inattentiveness or clumsiness on my part
  - Sudden attraction on the roadside
  - Walking two dogs with different interests
- Collar cues, "silky leash"
- Can we rely on pressure even less?

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**Leash Dip: Slack as Attention Cue**



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**Leash Dip Practice**



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**Leash Dip Practice**



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## Roadside Settle



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## Putting Skills Together



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## Other Ideas to Explore

- Emily Larlham on slow pacing for puppies (Kikopup)
- Other alternatives to "giving" to leash tension



KIKOPUP "LARGE BREED LEASH WALKING TIP" [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/UX7V1\\_58868](https://youtu.be/UX7V1_58868)

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## Parting Thoughts

- Loose leash walking is a suite of interlocking skills.
  - This is true no matter what you want it to look like.
  - Cues and reinforcers come from you and from the environment.
  - Your behavior works the same way.
  - Component behaviors for both dog and handler can be taught separately and linked using cues as reinforcers.
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## Where to Find Me

- [kikiyablondogtraining.com](http://kikiyablondogtraining.com)
  - Instagram: @kiki.yablon
  - Facebook (less often): <https://www.facebook.com/KikiYablonDogTraining>
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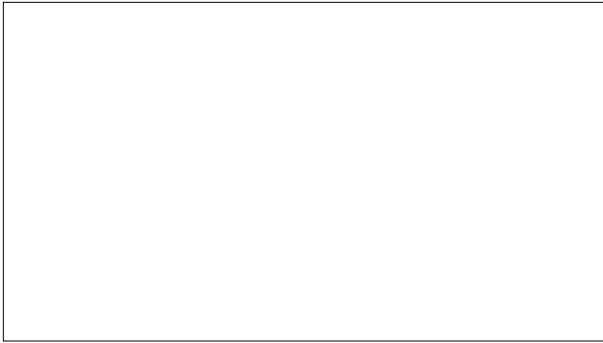
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**Leash Dip: Slack as Attention Cue**

- Walk butt up under spine
- Walk up/gather leash if needed
- Lower forearm
- Mark as leash dips, deliver treat



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**Leash Dip: Slack as Attention Cue**



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**Leash Dip: Slack as Attention Cue**



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**Leash Dip: Slack as Attention Cue**



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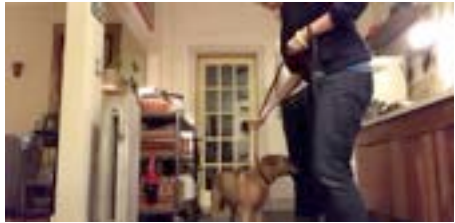
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**Leash Dip: Slack as Attention Cue**



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