

Running with your dog

Running with your dog is great opportunity to bond, and share an activity that you both love. Your dog will burn off excess energy, and a tired dog is a good dog.

To make running with your dog a success there are some things to do before you start.

If your dog is a puller, you are going to want to teach some leash manners before you start running. As with walking your dog, running will be much more enjoyable and safe if you are in control.

Before you start

Being in control means that you decide when, where and how fast you get somewhere, your dog follows your lead not the other way around.

Leash Manners to teach your dog before you start running

- Staying on one side - if your dog is moving from side to side it increases the chances of an injury
- Following your lead - you want your dog to follow you, not the other way around.
- Keep the leash loose - it will be more enjoyable for you and your dog if the leash stays loose rather than constantly having tension on the leash and pressure on your dog's throat.

Teaching the running rules to your dog should be done separately; set up training sessions to work specifically on the running rules. The concepts for teaching your dog the rules are relatively simple; it just takes consistency and repetition.

- Every time your dog pulls STOP and wait for him/her to release the tension on the leash. When the leash is loose, give a cheerful "let's go" cue and start again. By stopping as soon as the leash becomes tight you are teaching that he/she will only get to move forward on a loose leash. Loose = Go, Tight leash/Tension = Stop.
- Every time your dog crosses in front or behind you STOP and reposition yourself on the correct side. Give a cherry "let's go" cue and start again. If you stop every time your dog crosses sides they will learn that to keep moving forward he/she needs to stay on one side
- Keep the leash short. You will have better control of your dog if you keep the leash short. Ideally you only want the leash long enough for your dog to be beside you with a little slack in the leash. If you allow more distance lose some control. When you keep a short leash you are able to respond to your dogs movements much faster, which will speed up the learning process.

Teaching dogs anything is all about reinforcement and association. The reinforcement should be something your dog really likes, and especially what he really wants NOW. When you teach your dog running rules, the assumption is that your dog really wants to run with you. So the reinforcement for good leash behavior is that he/she gets to continue running.

If your dog either pulls or crosses you, you stop running and only start again when the leash is loose or he/she is on the correct side. Your dog will learn the association of tight leash = stop and loose leash = go, only through lots of reinforcement and repetition.

Helpful equipment

Obviously you can run with your dog using pretty much any leash and collar you want, but some equipment will make the run more enjoyable and safer for both you and your dog.

Footwear

There are also a lot of dog boots available. A good dog boot will protect your dog's feet from the harsh summer heat, the freezing cold in the winter, and dangerous debris, such as sharp rocks and broken glass when you are running off road. If you choose to use boots, make sure they fit well and have good support.

Collars

- Halti/Promise collar - these self correcting collars are a great way to teach your dog not pull, but you have to be careful when using them when running with your dog as they may cause damage to the neck and/or spine if there is a sudden stop.
- Corrective collar - such as a pinch or choke collar should not be used when running as you may cause serious damage on sudden stops
- Body harness - these are great for taking stress of the dog's neck and spine, but they can encourage a dog to pull as they are able to use their entire body to pull forward. You may want to teach your dog how to walk/run with you without pulling before you use a harness or you may find yourself being dragged down the path.
- Regular buckle collar - works well for running as there will be some pressure on the dogs neck if they get to excited and start to pull, but it won't tighten and choke them if they get carried away.

Leashes

- Flexi/ retractable leash - I don't recommend these as they don't allow you much control. If the flexi is extended then your dog will be all over the place and you won't be able to react quickly enough if needed. It is also dangerous for you as your dog will be able to tangle you up in the leash.
- Regular nylon/ leather leash - these work fine as long as you are able to shorten the leash to whatever length is best for your height. If you can hold the leash in a way that enables you to keep the length as short as needed to remain safe and in control, a regular leash works great.
- Hands free leash - these leashes attach to your waist and allow you to keep your hands free. These can be great as you don't need to worry about hanging onto a leash, or having your arms pulled as you run.

Get everything you need
at

www.dogztore.ca

<http://www.dogztore.ca/index.php>

Collars

- DOGzwear nylon collars
- Ruff Stuff leather collars

Leashes

- DOGzwear nylon control leash
- Ruff Stuff leather leashes
- Freeleash hands free leash system

Footwear

- Neo Paws high performance outdoor boots
- Neo Paws regular performance outdoor boots
- Neo Paws summer/indoor boots