



THE

LEASH PULLING FIX

The Step-by-Step System to Stop Your Dog From
Dragging You Down the Street. Permanently.



Structure creates calm. Calm creates reliability.

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WHAT'S INSIDE

This guide is the exact system we use with every Board & Train dog at Unleash'd K9. It works on any breed, any age, any size. No fluff, no filler — just the protocol, the equipment, the timeline, and the troubleshooting you need to fix leash pulling permanently.

- 01 WHY YOUR DOG PULLS (THE 5 ROOT CAUSES)
- 02 EQUIPMENT & SETUP
- 03 THE 3-STEP PULLING FIX PROTOCOL
- 04 THE COMPLETE STRUCTURED WALK
- 05 YOUR WEEK-BY-WEEK PROGRESS TIMELINE
- 06 8 MISTAKES THAT MAKE PULLING WORSE
- 07 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
- 08 DAILY WALK CHECKLIST (PRINTABLE)

**Your dog does not need a new harness. They need a new system.
The leash is not the problem. The structure around the walk is the problem.**

SECTION 01

WHY YOUR DOG PULLS

"They pull because it works. That's it. That's the whole reason."

Your dog is not pulling because they are dominant, bad, or trying to disrespect you. Every time your dog lunges forward and gets where they want to go, they learn one powerful lesson: **pulling equals access**. More sniffing, more speed, more control over the walk. The leash goes tight, and the walk continues anyway. From your dog's perspective, pulling is the single most effective strategy available. Why would they stop?



THE 5 ROOT CAUSES OF LEASH PULLING

#	ROOT CAUSE	WHY IT MATTERS	THE FIX
1	No clear position established	Your dog doesn't know where they're supposed to walk relative to you. Without a defined heel position, there is no 'wrong' place for them to be.	Establish heel position before taking a single step (Section 03, Step 1)
2	Forward movement isn't contingent on position	The walk continues whether the leash is tight or loose. Pulling has zero consequences.	Stop every time the leash goes tight. Movement = position only (Section 03, Step 2)
3	The walk has no rules	Sniffing, greeting, and zig-zagging are all self-selected by the dog. The dog is leading. You're just holding the leash.	You pick the direction, the pace, the stops, and the route. The dog follows your plan.
4	Excitement is rewarded at the start	You open the door while your dog is frantic and start moving while they pull. The walk is lost before it begins.	Calm leash-up, calm threshold, calm first 5 minutes. Set the tone before the walk.
5	Inconsistency	Some walks have rules, some don't. Some people enforce, others let it slide. The dog plays the odds and defaults to pulling.	Every walk, every person, same rules. No exceptions. No 'just this once.'

Most owners try to fix pulling with the wrong solutions. They yank the leash back. They stop randomly for a few seconds then keep going. They switch to a no-pull harness (which just shifts the pressure, not the behavior). They bribe with treats every three steps. None of these address the root cause.

Your dog has never been taught that walking beside you is the only way the walk moves forward.
That's what this guide fixes.

SECTION 02

EQUIPMENT & SETUP

"The right equipment makes communication instant and clear."

Before you start practicing, make sure your setup is correct. The wrong equipment makes everything harder. The right equipment makes communication instant and clear. This is not about buying expensive gear — it's about using tools that actually help your dog understand what you're asking.



WHAT YOU NEED

ITEM	WHAT TO GET	WHY IT MATTERS
Leash	Standard 4-6 foot leather or biothane leash. Fixed length, not retractable.	Your primary communication tool. Fixed length gives you control and gives the dog clarity. Retractable leashes teach pulling.
Collar / tool	Flat collar for mild pullers. Martingale for escape artists. Properly fitted prong collar for strong pullers with months of bad habits.	Match the tool to your dog's intensity. There is no shame in using a tool that helps your dog understand faster.
Treats	Small, soft, high-value. Boiled chicken, freeze-dried liver, or string cheese cut into pea-sized pieces.	Training currency. You need hundreds of reps. Small treats = more reps per session without overfeeding.
Treat pouch	Clip-on pouch with magnetic closure for fast access.	Both hands free for leash handling. Digging through pockets breaks timing. Timing is everything.
Your mindset	Patience. You will walk slower and cover less distance for the first 2 weeks. That's the process.	Measure success by the quality of position, not distance covered. Walk quality over walk distance.

WHAT TO STOP USING IMMEDIATELY

- **Retractable leashes** — they literally train your dog to pull for more slack. This is the #1 enemy of loose leash walking.
- **Front-clip harnesses as a permanent fix** — they manage pulling but don't teach the dog anything new. A band-aid, not a solution.
- **Long leads for structured walks** — those are for recall practice in open fields, not heel work on sidewalks.
- **Your voice as the primary correction** — saying 'no' or 'heel' every 3 seconds turns the word into white noise.
- **Head halters without proper conditioning** — these can cause neck injury and often create more frustration, not less.

RECOMMENDED GEAR LIST

Shop our curated list of the exact training tools we use: a.co/go3DW2Y

PRODUCT	WHY WE USE IT
Leather Training Leash (6ft)	Go-to for heel work. Durable, comfortable grip, perfect weight for clear communication.
Biothane Long Line (15-30ft)	Waterproof, lightweight. Essential for recall practice and controlled off-leash distance work.
Herm Sprenger Prong Collar	Gold standard for stronger pullers. Proper fit: snug and high behind the ears.

PRODUCT	WHY WE USE IT
Treat Pouch with Belt Clip	Hands-free treat access. Magnetic closure for fast retrieval during reps.
Elevated Dog Cot / Place Bed	For decompression and place command. Every dog needs one.

SECTION 03

THE 3-STEP PULLING FIX PROTOCOL

"This is the exact protocol we use with every Board & Train dog."

It works on any breed, any age, any size. The principles do not change. Only the intensity and duration of practice adjust based on your individual dog. **Do not skip steps. Do not rush steps.** Each one builds on the last.



SESSION RULES: 5-10 minutes max. 3-5 sessions per day. Crate 20-30 min between sessions for decompression. Always end on a win. More short sessions beats fewer long ones.

STEP 1: ESTABLISH THE POSITION

Your dog needs to know exactly where they belong before you take a single step. Pick a side (left is traditional, but either works — just never change it). The correct heel position is:

- Dog's shoulder aligned with your leg (not ahead, not behind)
- Leash has a visible J-shape of slack between your hand and the collar
- Dog's head is facing forward, not turned toward distractions
- Dog's body is relaxed but attentive, not tense or lunging

How to teach it: Stand still with your dog on leash. Using a treat, lure the dog into the correct position at your side. The moment they arrive in position, mark 'Yes' and reward. Do NOT move yet. Just stand there and repeat. Lure into position, mark, reward. Do this 15-20 times. Then add one step forward, lure to maintain position, mark and reward. Build to 10 steps of maintained position before you ever step onto the sidewalk.

METRIC	TARGET	NOTES
Sessions/day	3-5 sessions, 5 min each	Spread across the day. More short sessions = faster learning.
Location	Yard or quiet indoor space	Zero distractions. This is foundation work.
Reps	15-20 position lures per session	Quality over speed. Mark the exact moment they arrive.
Duration	3-5 days at this step	Don't rush. Step 2 will fail if Step 1 isn't solid.
Win condition	Dog defaults to your side when you stop	They choose the position without being lured.

STEP 2: MOVEMENT = POSITION

Now the rule becomes binary. The walk **only** moves forward when the dog is in the correct position. The moment your dog moves out of position or the leash gets tight, you do one thing: **STOP. Completely.**

Do not yank. Do not say anything. Do not look at the dog. Just stop and stand like a tree. Wait. The dog will eventually look back at you, release leash pressure, or return to your side. The INSTANT the leash goes slack or the dog takes a step back toward you, mark 'Yes' and start walking again.

If the dog immediately surges forward again, stop again. You may stop 50 times in the first 100 yards. That is not failure. That IS the process.

**Pulling = the walk stops. Position = the walk continues.
It is that simple. And it works with every dog.**

METRIC	TARGET	NOTES
Sessions/day	3-4 walk sessions, 5-10 min each	Build these around potty breaks to make it natural.

METRIC	TARGET	NOTES
Expected stops	30-50 per session initially	Normal. By session 5-7, pulling drops dramatically.
Location	Quiet street, residential area	Still low distraction. Don't add difficulty yet.
Duration	5-7 days at this step	Most dogs start connecting by session 3.
Win condition	Dog defaults to your side when you stop	They choose slack leash over pulling.

STEP 3: ADD REAL-WORLD DIFFICULTY

Once your dog holds position on quiet streets, start adding difficulty gradually. The rules stay exactly the same. Only the environment changes.

THE DIFFICULTY LADDER (follow this order):

LEVEL	ENVIRONMENT	WHAT TO EXPECT
1	Quiet residential street, no dogs or people	Where you've been practicing. Should be solid.
2	Street where dogs are visible behind fences	Dog may fixate. Use about-turns to redirect focus.
3	Street with occasional foot traffic (20+ feet)	Mild distraction. Reward heavily for maintaining position.
4	Street with other dogs at a distance (across the street)	The real test begins. Create distance if needed.
5	Busier sidewalk with regular pedestrian traffic	Multiple distractions. Shorten sessions if needed.
6	Walking past other dogs at closer range (10-15 feet)	High difficulty. Have high-value treats ready.
7	Pet store parking lot, outdoor cafe, multiple distractions	Near mastery. If the dog holds here, you've won.
8	Passing directly by other dogs on the same sidewalk	Full proofing. The dog maintains position through anything.

Add direction changes (about-turns) when the dog drifts ahead. Change pace randomly: fast for 10 steps, slow for 5, stop completely, then resume. Reward longer stretches of correct walking with a release cue ('go sniff' or 'free') where the dog gets 30-60 seconds of free sniffing as a reward.

SECTION 04

THE COMPLETE STRUCTURED WALK

"A structured walk starts before you leave the house and doesn't end until the dog is settled inside."



PHASE 1: BEFORE THE WALK

- **Dog must be CALM before the leash goes on.** If they jump when they see the leash, put it down and walk away. Wait 30 seconds. Try again. Repeat until calm.
- **Leash up calmly.** No frantic energy from you either. Calm is contagious.
- **Door threshold:** Dog sits and waits at the door. You walk through first. Pause. Then release the dog to follow.
- **First 10 feet outside:** If the dog bolts or surges, turn around, go back inside, and start over.

PHASE 2: DURING THE WALK

- **First 5 minutes: strict heel.** Zero sniffing, zero greeting, zero deviation. This sets the tone for the entire walk.
- **Maintain a consistent pace.** Do not speed up when the dog speeds up. You set the rhythm.
- **Use about-turns** when the dog drifts ahead. Turn 180 degrees, walk the opposite direction.
- **Every 5-10 min of good heel,** give a release ('go sniff') for 30-60 seconds as a reward.
- **You decide if greetings happen.** The dog does NOT self-select social contact with people or dogs.

- If the dog fixates on a trigger, redirect immediately. Do not wait for escalation.

PHASE 3: AFTER THE WALK

- Calm re-entry at the door. Dog waits for release before walking inside.
- Remove the leash calmly. No celebration, no excitement.
- Direct the dog to crate or place bed for 15-30 min of decompression. The walk ends with calm.

SECTION 05

YOUR WEEK-BY-WEEK PROGRESS TIMELINE

"What realistic progress looks like when you follow the system."



WEEK	FOCUS	WHAT TO EXPECT	WIN CONDITION
Week 1	Foundation. Heel position in yard/quiet street. Stop-start protocol every time.	30-50 stops per walk. Short 10-15 min walks. Quality over distance. It feels slow. That's normal.	Dog starts glancing at you during stops instead of pulling harder.

WEEK	FOCUS	WHAT TO EXPECT	WIN CONDITION
Week 2	Building consistency. Walks extend to 15-25 min. About-turns when dog drifts. Controlled release breaks.	Pulling drops 40-60%. Stops decrease significantly. Dog is connecting the dots.	Dog defaults to your side when you stop rather than lunging forward.
Week 3	Adding difficulty. Walk near mild distractions: other dogs at a distance, light foot traffic. Vary pace randomly.	Good position on quiet streets. Some regression near distractions. That's expected.	Dog recovers from distractions within 2-3 seconds and returns to heel.
Week 4	Proofing. Walk in moderate-distraction areas: pet store lots, busier sidewalks. Pass other dogs at closer range.	80%+ of walk in correct position. Treat frequency decreasing. The walk itself becomes the reward.	You can walk past other dogs without the leash going tight. That's mastery.

Dogs that have been pulling for years may take 6-8 weeks. Dogs under 1 year often respond in 1-2 weeks. The timeline adjusts, but the system never changes.

SECTION 06

8 MISTAKES THAT MAKE PULLING WORSE

"If it's not improving after a week, you're making one of these."



MISTAKE	WHY IT HAPPENS	THE FIX
Inconsistency between walks	One walk is structured, the next is a free-for-all because you're tired. Your dog plays the odds.	Every walk, same rules. If pulling works even 30% of the time, they'll try it 100% of the time.
Talking too much	Repeating 'heel' every 5 seconds turns the word into background noise.	Say it once. If they don't respond, stop and reset. The correction is the stop, not your voice.
Starting the walk in excitement	Dog is amped before you leave and you start walking anyway.	Calm leash-up, calm threshold, calm first 5 minutes. You MUST set the tone before the walk begins.
Letting the dog choose the route	Dog picks every direction, sniffs every pole, stops at every tree.	You lead. You pick the direction, the pace, the stops, and the route. The dog follows your plan.
Rewarding pulling with continuation	Every time the leash is tight and you keep walking, you reinforced pulling.	You must stop. Every. Single. Time. This is the #1 most important rule.
Too much leash slack	6 feet of slack gives the dog room to build momentum before the correction.	Keep leash at waist-to-hand length. J-shape slack, not puddle-on-the-ground slack.
Skipping the boring reps	Position drills in the yard feel pointless.	Foundation work in low distraction makes high-distraction success possible. Don't skip the boring reps.
Different rules for different people	One family member enforces, another lets the dog pull freely.	Everyone follows the same protocol. The dog performs to the lowest standard in the household.

SECTION 07

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

"10 answers from a professional trainer."

Q: How long until I see results?

Most owners see a noticeable difference within 3-5 walks. Significant improvement in 2-3 weeks. Full reliability in most environments takes 4-6 weeks. Dogs that have been pulling for years take longer because the habit is deeply ingrained.

Q: Does this work on all breeds?

Yes. A Chihuahua and a Cane Corso both learn the same way: pulling stops movement, position creates movement. Only the tool and intensity of practice change.

Q: My dog only pulls toward other dogs. What do I do?

That's leash reactivity, which is different from simple pulling. The structured walk is the foundation for fixing it, but you may need distance-based desensitization. If it doesn't improve after 2-3 weeks, contact us for professional help.

Q: What about puppies?

Start leash introduction as early as 8-10 weeks. Keep sessions to 3-5 minutes. The fundamentals are identical. Puppies learn faster because they don't have years of bad habits.

Q: Can I use a harness instead of a collar?

A back-clip harness encourages pulling — that's literally how sled dogs are rigged. A front-clip manages pulling temporarily but doesn't teach. For actual behavior change, a collar-based system provides clearer communication.

Q: My spouse doesn't follow the rules.

The dog performs to the lowest standard in the household. Have your partner read this guide. Walk together. If one person is structured and the other is loose, the dog defaults to pulling on the loose person every time.

Q: I tried this and it didn't work.

It works. Review the 8 Mistakes section. Rate yourself honestly. If you're still stuck after 3 weeks of truly consistent practice, contact us for a professional evaluation.

Q: Do I need to use treats forever?

No. Treats are a teaching tool for weeks 1-3. Reduce to intermittent by weeks 3-6. By week 6-8, the walk itself and release breaks become the reward. Most dogs transition off treats within 2 months.

Q: How long should my walks be?

A focused 15-minute structured walk beats a sloppy 60-minute walk. Start with 10-15 minutes and increase by 5 minutes per week. At full proficiency: 20-40 minutes, twice daily.

Q: When can my dog meet other dogs on walks?

When YOU decide. Put the dog in a sit, wait for calm, then release briefly. If they can't hold a sit while another dog approaches, they're not ready for greetings yet.

SECTION 08

DAILY WALK CHECKLIST

"Print this. Use it every walk. Rate yourself honestly."

BEFORE THE WALK

- Dog was calm before leash went on
- Leash-up happened without jumping or spinning
- Dog waited at door threshold for release
- Dog exited door without rushing or pulling

DURING THE WALK

- First 5 minutes were strict heel (no sniffing)
- Stopped EVERY time the leash went tight
- Used about-turns when dog drifted ahead
- Did not repeat commands more than once
- Gave controlled release breaks as rewards
- Did not allow dog to self-select greetings
- Redirected immediately when dog fixated
- Kept verbal communication minimal and calm

AFTER THE WALK

- Calm re-entry at door (waited for release)
- Leash removed calmly (no celebration)
- Dog went to crate or place bed for decompression

TODAY'S WALK RATING: 1 = Constant pulling | 3 = Mixed | 5 = Clean heel
Track your progress. What gets measured gets managed.

READY FOR THE COMPLETE SYSTEM?

The Leash Pulling Fix is just one piece of the puzzle.
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