

WALK YOUR DOG INSTEAD OF YOUR DOG WALKING YOU  
WITH THE POWER OF 3-MINUTE GAMES

# PULL NO MORE



## PLAY BOOK



**Absolute Dogs.**

Tom Mitchell & Lauren Langman

# THE LOOSE LEASH DREAM

Loose leash walking is one of those things that people dream of. It may be the reason you got your dog in the first place - a relaxed walk in the park or a lazy stroll down the beach at sunset with your furry best friend sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

The reality is often very different and day-to-day walks often feel like a military operation where you end up with a dog struggling at the end of the leash to get to wherever their nose takes them, all at the speed of light and all whilst pulling you along for the ride - not to mention all the responsibility you have to take on and how prepared you need to be to manage their behaviour on walks, worrying about what might be around the corner and constantly calling your dog to slow down or stopping to ensure they aren't choking themselves as they pull along like a steam train!

The truth is that real loose leash walking isn't achieved by taking all the responsibility on

yourself as a dog owner. Instead, you need to equip your dog with the skills they need to take some of that responsibility on themselves so that they can make great choices. As dog owners, we like to think our dogs want to be with us and actively want to pay attention to us and this is certainly true, but sometimes the environment gets in the way of that.

In order to achieve super loose leash walking and a well-behaved dog who actively listens, it's important to grow a solid foundation for your relationship with your dog that adds value to their interactions with you and builds focus on you, promotes engagement with you and most importantly, builds their desire to stay within close proximity to you.

These concepts are immensely powerful in achieving that loose leash walking dream - so pop your arm back into its socket, occupy your dog with a tasty chew and get ready to dive into the solutions to all your leash pulling problems!



## The Power of Proximity



Proximity is having a dog who wants to stay close and remain within your bubble – so even though they get to interact with the environment, explore and be a dog, anything outside that bubble is none of their business - it's all about creating an understanding that being around you and staying in close proximity is a good deal because dogs will always hang out where they find the most value!

It's super easy to reward your dog for hanging out in close proximity to you - you can simply take some of their daily food allowance - or as we like to call it, their daily pot of value - and offer rewards at any time your dog chooses to be close.

When you are working on this concept, aim to stay in one spot rather than moving about so that the place you are standing becomes relatively disinteresting to your dog. The result is that without any nagging or pressure, you

become really interesting! Using some of your dog's daily food allowance in this way - even with a dog who naturally would not choose to be close - allows your dog to discover that value in proximity.

It's also vital that you always aim to set your dog up for success, so it's important to use a puppy line or a leash and harness to limit their choices if necessary, depending on the environment where you are training and be mindful of what might be happening around and about. Your dog may notice lots of different things in the environment, but you are looking for your dog to be relatively calm and for them to find being close to you rewarding.

**Remember, you are not looking to reward your dog away from you, outside your area of immediate proximity. If you imagine a scatter graph, you want all the X's to be around your feet so your dog is really finding that value in being close to you, rather than several feet away or well outside your personal bubble.**



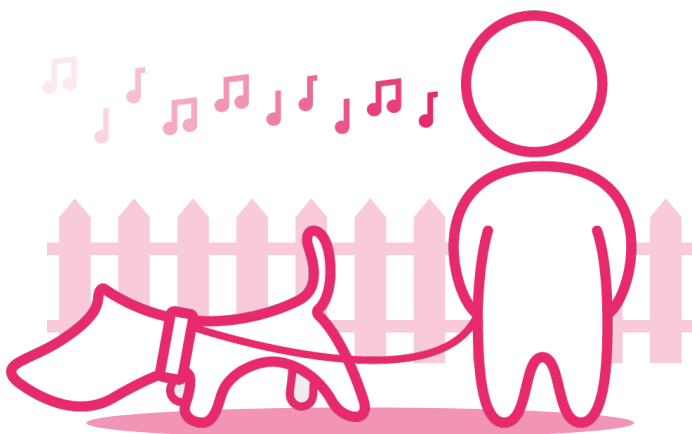


# TRANSFORMATIONAL TOP TIPS

## Taking your leash walks to the next level

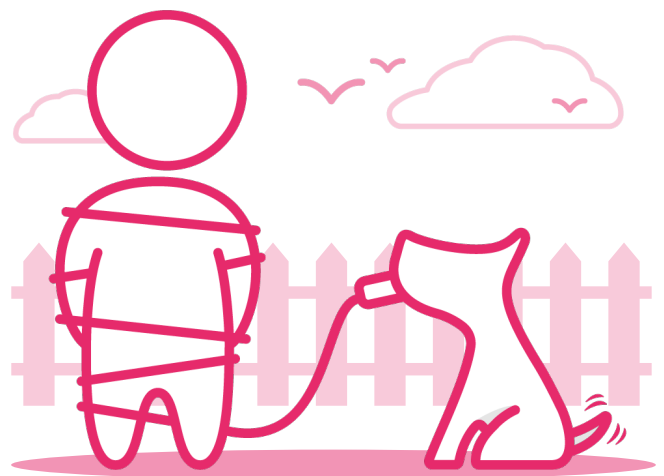


Here are some really super top tips, tricks and hacks for taking your walks from where they are today and transforming them into something that's both super fun and enjoyable for both you and your dog - and easier on your arms!



### Start as you mean to go on

There is huge value in growing calmness and proximity in your dog, giving them the ability to calmly hang out with you, even when there are distractions in the environment. If you want your walks to be cool, calm and collected and an all-around enjoyable experience for both you and your dog, simply start out each and every walk by just calmly wandering and keeping your energy low - scatter feeding is also a great way to lower your dog's arousal! This way your dog will learn that the beginning of your walks are actually a non-event and not a time to get over-aroused or super excited about.



### Never expect, never assume

When it comes to your dog's understanding of walking on a leash and walking with you, don't just assume they know how to do that and what you expect of them. These are just assumptions we wrongly make as human beings and dog trainers - and these assumptions and expectations are typically even reinforced at conventional training classes where instructors have you walking up and down with your dog on lead.

The fact is, dogs don't come preprogrammed knowing how to walk on lead. They don't instinctively know that when you attach a leash to them and start walking forwards, they should also walk forward - but not too far forward - and equally, they don't understand that when you walk backwards, turn left or right or change directions in any way, that they should do that too.

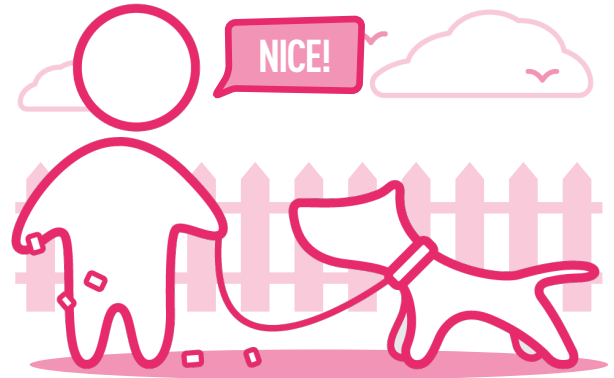
This is something your dog needs your support and guidance to learn - and there are so many games to help you teach them!





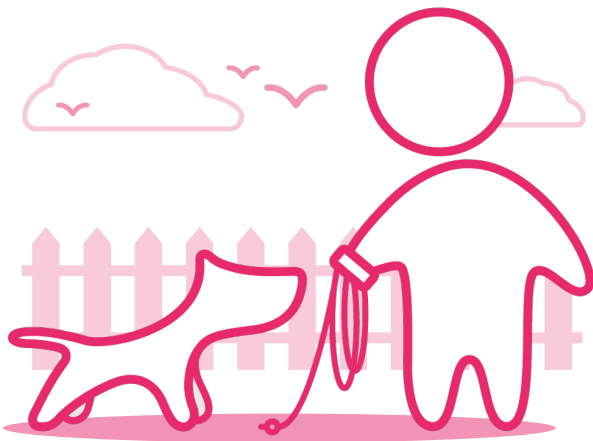
### Don't be a helicopter pet parent

It's super important to avoid nagging your dog and constantly checking in on them as they walk beside you or investigate the environment around you as many dogs will come to find this a punishing experience and won't want to listen or keep close to you. Always make sure you are giving your dog the space and freedom (on leash or off) to enjoy their walk or even just some adventures in the garden in a safe way and without constant input from you interrupting them.



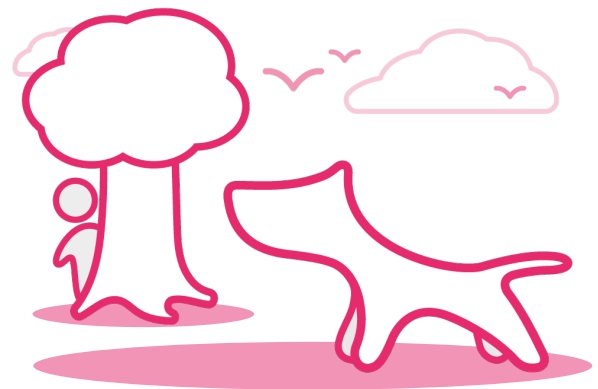
### Reinforce your dog's great choices

When you are out on a walk - or even when you are hanging out in the comfort of your own garden - always make a huge deal out of any moments where your dog chooses to check in with you! Whether it's a simple glance toward you, any orientation and movement in your direction or even if they choose to come right back and hang out with you, reinforcing all of your dog's amazing choices, no matter how small, will really show them where the value is and how much of a great deal you can offer and set them up for success when out and about in new environments!



### Make the leash or long line a non-event

No matter where you are with your dog and their training, whether you are at home, in the garden or out and about, it's important to make a point of picking your dog's leash up and handling it - just play around with it, but don't actually put your dog back on lead or ask them to recall or come back to you. Making the leash a non-event and removing the predictability that when you pick up the leash, the fun is over and it's time to go home is huge in preparing your dog for off-leash freedom!



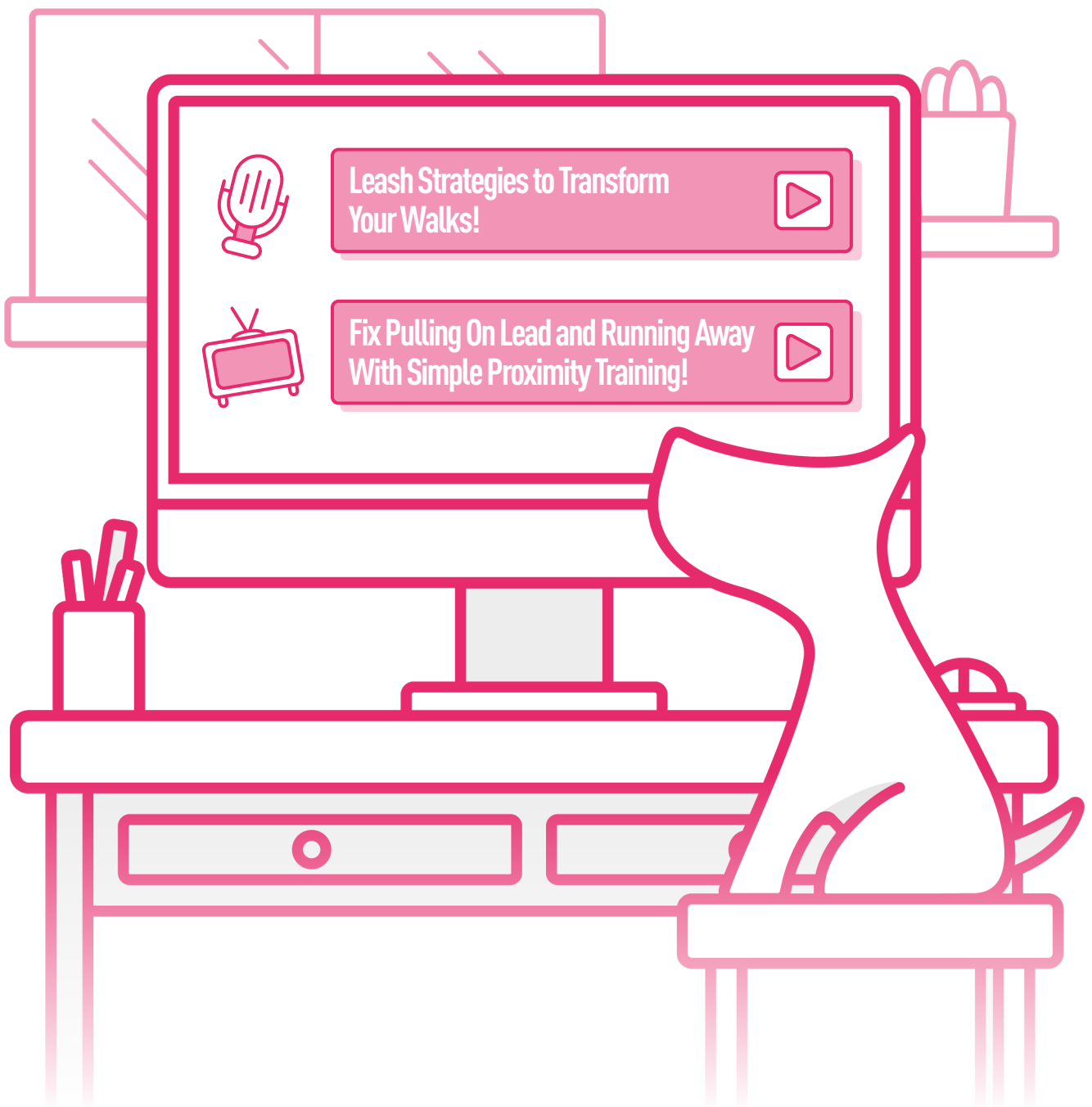
### Be interesting. Keep them guessing

It's important to mix things up and ditch any sort of routine when walking with your dog. Try changing directions randomly without calling your dog (what do they do?), or hide behind a tree and see if they can hunt you down (and party hard if they do)!

Mixing it up, changing your patterns and being spontaneous will boost your dog's engagement with you AND their disengagement with the environment because just like the elusive squirrel, you have become fun and unpredictable and they never know what you're going to do next!

# THERE'S MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM!

Check out more super games, tips, tricks and troubleshooting hacks to take your leash walking struggles and turn them into your dog's greatest strengths!



# THERE'S A GAME FOR THAT!

## Top games to transform your dog's loose leash walking skills

No matter whether you are in the very first stages of training your dog to walk nicely on lead or you are working with your dog to build and refine their loose leash walking skills, the fact is, if you play games to grow your dog's value in keeping close, focusing on you and engaging with you rather than the environment, you are also developing super loose leash skills at the same time!

You are in a realm of training where teaching dogs concepts and building their skills, turns their struggles and weaknesses into their biggest strengths. This is training FOR the situation, not IN the situation.

There are so many powerful games that you can play to build great loose leash walking skills, grow super off-leash freedom and develop an even more amazing relationship with your dog - and the best thing is, through the power of games you also get to have an immense amount of fun with your dog at the same time!

Let's take a look at some super strategies and our top 3 games for boosting your dog's loose leash walking skills and preparing them for a lifetime of lovely loose leash walking!



# SUPER STRATEGY 1: DITCH THAT LEASH ROUTINE

Dogs are born predicting. They are exceptionally good at it and it doesn't take them long at all to pair one particular event with another, so it's incredibly important that you remove that element of predictability from their leash and ditch any sort of routine you might currently have where their leash is involved.

Currently, you might only pick up your dog's leash with it's time for a walk or a trip in the car to the park, beach or even to the vet. Basically, you only pick up their leash when something eventful is going to happen. This causes your dog's arousal level to go up and they will likely get quite excited.

Another routine you might have with your dog's leash is that while you are on a walk, you give them some off leash time - to give your arms a break! - and you pick up their lead again and attempt to put it back on when it's time to go home. When it comes to ditching the routine with the leash - or any aspect of your dog's life - you are aiming to lessen the predictability of that event.

As you are going about your day, pick up your dog's leash and put it straight back down and continue on with your day. Then later, you might come back and pick the leash up, take it to another part of the house and set it down, before going on with whatever you were doing before. Randomly picking up the lead, handling it and then putting it down again with nothing exciting happening will begin to change your dog's perception that the leash is not only an important item, but an exciting one as well!

As your dog comes to see their leash as more of a non-event, you can progress to picking it up, clipping it on them and then immediately

taking it back off and putting it away - gradually extending the time they wear it and changing what you do or don't do while they are wearing it - and this will also reinforce the idea that the leash is not important and nothing to get excited about.

It can also be helpful to have your dog wear a light puppy line or long line around the house and in the garden - this will help them associate wearing the leash with non-event happenings throughout the day and it will also help you while you are training them and growing their value in proximity as the puppy line will help you manage their behaviour and guide them into making good choices.

**Take some time to think about your current routine with your dog - and their leash. Taking what you've learnt so far, what are some things you can start doing today to ditch the routine with your dog's leash?**

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# TOP TIP

Puppy lines and long lines can also come in handy when you want to avoid any situation where your dog starts to predict the end of a walk as most dogs can very quickly come to view this as a bad deal - and this can also affect the value they place in being in close proximity to you. Have you ever seen a dog play 'keep away' at the end of a walk? Perhaps your dog has even played this with you!

Always having a line on your dog means that because they are always wearing their 'leash' - whether they are in your garden or out on a walk - when it's time to come inside or finish up your walk, your dog won't have the negative association that wearing a leash or having one clipped back on back on means the end of the walk and all their fun.

**WANT LONG LINES AND PUPPY LINES? WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!**



Biothane Long Lines



Puppy Lines



# LOOSE LEASH WALKING: GAME 1

# PROXIMITY ZONE

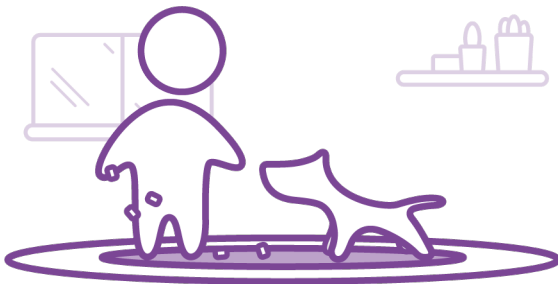
This game is all about growing your dog's understanding that being close is good. Imagine there is effectively a zone around you called the Proximity Zone. This is a special zone for your dog and it is going to become a very high value area for them.

You have your dog's pot of value for the day, so it's time to spend it in this new area that encourages

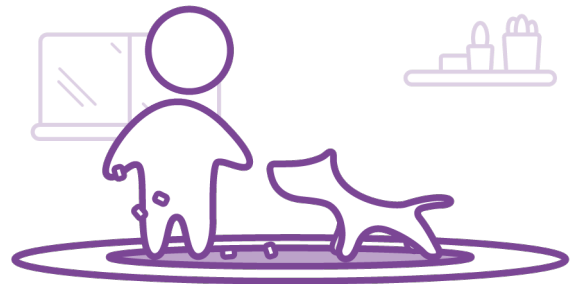
your dog to discover just how valuable being close to you can be.

Wouldn't it be amazing if your dog didn't want to leave your side, not even for that jogger that just ran by or a dog playing in the distance, looking like the perfect distraction to chase and frolic with? In today's game, both you and your dog are going to discover just how fun and essential the Proximity Zone can be.

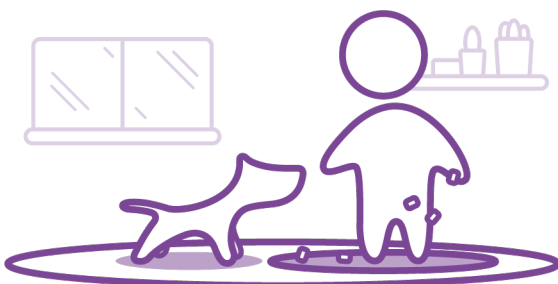
## HOW TO PLAY



**STEP 1:** Start with your dog nearby and place/drop/deliver food to them whenever they enter the area closest to you.



**STEP 2:** Repeat, repeat, repeat. Keep building that value in your dog being close to you by keeping those rewards coming!



**STEP 3:** Once you've placed generous amounts of value in that close zone, start to move about a little and see if your dog follows you and tries to stay within that new Proximity Zone.



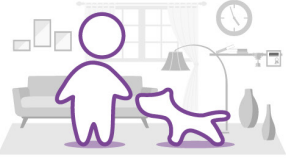
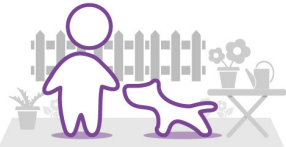



**STEP 4:** When you take the game out on the road, be prepared to remind your dog where the value is by playing the game with generous levels of reinforcement.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Remember, this is rules free! Don't place a lot of structure on your dog when playing this game. It's okay if your dog lays down, sits, it doesn't matter. You are going to reward your dog for being close to you.

**TROUBLESHOOTING:** If you are struggling to get your dog to engage in this game and stay close, you may need to experiment with more valuable food. For some dogs chicken, sausage or cheese are super high-value reward options, whereas some dogs may prefer their kibble, or even some carrot or cucumber! Remember that every dog is different.

## PROGRESS TRACKER:

# PROXIMITY ZONE

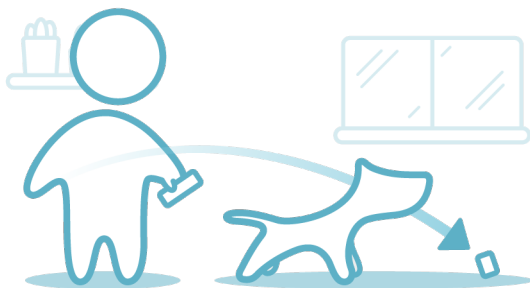
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# LOOSE LEASH WALKING: GAME 2

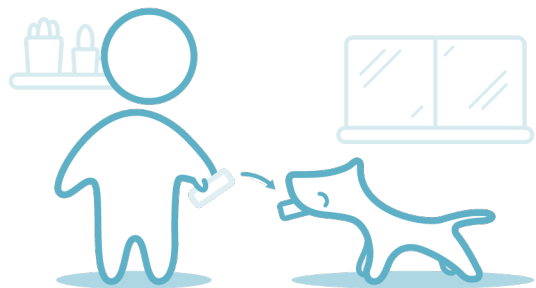
## PROXIMITY VORTEX

This game is all about your dog hanging out with you and making that the best thing ever! You're going to need two different value foods, a high value and a low value – think about what your dog values, you have free rein to experiment! The goal of this game is that you are teaching your dog that low value is out there in the environment and high value is right in with you in close proximity.

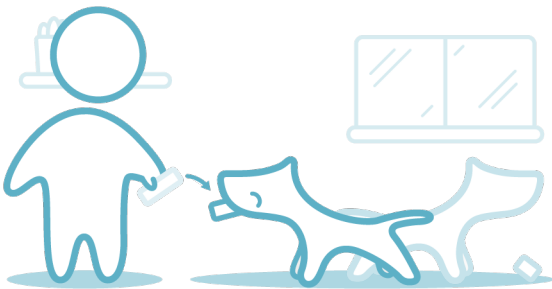
### HOW TO PLAY



**STEP 1:** With a different value food item in each hand, place out a piece of low-value food for your dog to eat.



**STEP 2:** When your dog orients back to you, reward them with the high-value food from your other hand.



**STEP 3:** Repeat the game, always throwing the low-value food out and rewarding the orientation back to you with high-value food.



**STEP 4:** Level up this game by throwing one piece of low-value food out, and when your dog orients back to you, lure them around your body and reward with the high-value food. This adds another layer of value to the idea of being in proximity with you.

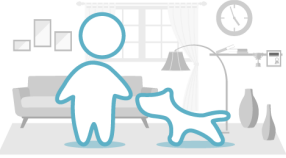
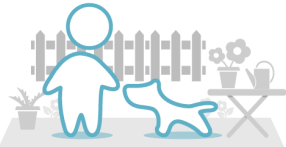



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You may need to experiment to find what your dog values. For some dogs chicken, sausage or cheese are super high-value reward options, whereas some dogs may prefer their kibble, or even some carrot or cucumber! Remember that every dog is different.

**TROUBLESHOOTING:** Don't worry if your dog gets to the point where they stop looking for the low-value food that you throw out. If that happens, you're kind of winning! Your dog has started to realise that hanging out with you is the best option!

When you reach that point, your dog is learning a really powerful concept – they are learning that no matter what is available to interact within the environment, the much better deal is with you!

**PROGRESS TRACKER:**

# PROXIMITY VORTEX

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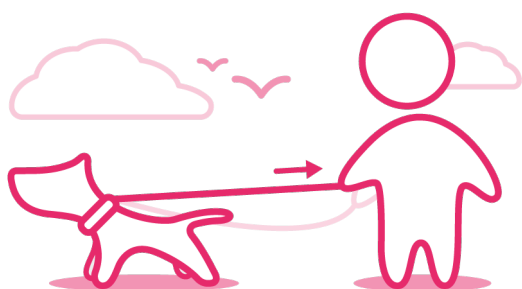


# LOOSE LEASH WALKING: GAME 3

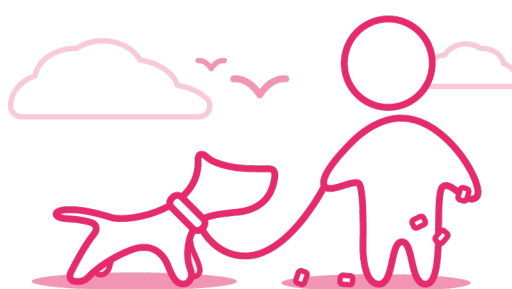
## GIVING IN TO LEASH PRESSURE

Dogs are hardwired with an opposition reflex (they pull!) so rather than expecting them to naturally know how to walk appropriately on a lead we need to teach them. We do this by playing the Giving Into Leash Pressure game. This is both a day-to-day tool and a game that grows disengagement.

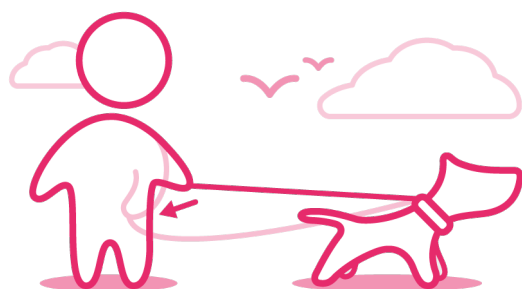
### HOW TO PLAY



**STEP 1:** With your dog on lead, apply some gentle pressure with the leash.



**STEP 2:** Reward your dog for moving in the direction of the applied pressure.



**STEP 3:** Play again! Vary the direction of the applied pressure so that your dog begins to immediately respond to the pressure by 'giving' and moving toward the pressure in any direction.



**STEP 4:** Be ready for your dog to pick this game up FAST! You may need to be quick to reinforce the brief interlude (or lack of one!) between the application of pressure and your dog yielding to the pressure.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The key with this game is gentle pressure. You are not pulling, yanking, or tugging at your dog's lead. You are applying a short duration of gentle pressure and rewarding your dog as soon as they relieve that pressure by giving in and moving toward it.

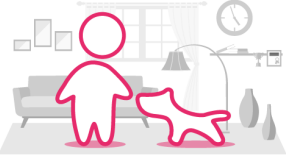
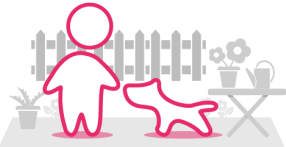



**TROUBLESHOOTING:** It's okay if your dog wants to sniff when you're working on this game. Simply wait them out - and don't give in to the urge to apply more pressure than necessary to get a response. Just be patient and as soon as they give into the leash pressure and orient to you, reward your dog with a huge disco party!

When your dog sniffs or checks out, see it as an opportunity or window where you get to apply a tiny bit more pressure - or duration of pressure - and then you'll effectively be testing whether they understand the concept or not.

What if your dog isn't super sniffy? Try becoming boring and not paying them any attention. As soon as they focus on something else, apply the leash pressure and start the game!

## PROGRESS TRACKER:

# GIVING IN TO LEASH PRESSURE

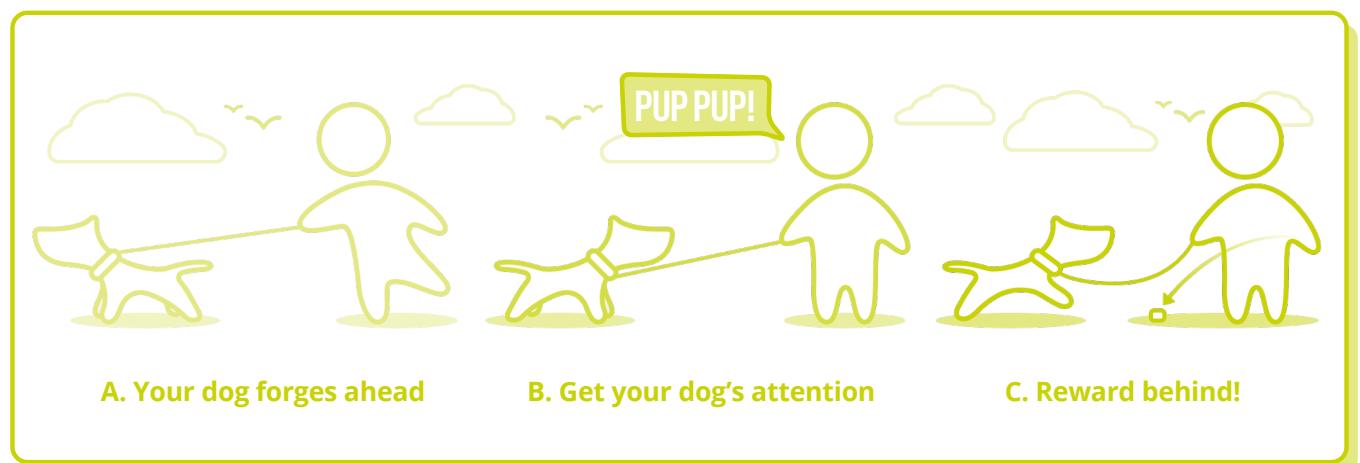
<p><b>LEVEL 1</b> <b>FAMILIAR INDOOR</b> ENVIRONMENTS - NO DISTRACTIONS</p> 	<p><b>ON LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>OFF LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>LOCATIONS</p> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<p>NOTES:</p> <input type="text"/>
<p><b>LEVEL 2</b> <b>FAMILIAR OUTDOOR</b> ENVIRONMENTS - NO DISTRACTIONS</p> 	<p><b>ON LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>OFF LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>LOCATIONS</p> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<p>NOTES:</p> <input type="text"/>
<p><b>LEVEL 3</b> <b>REAL LIFE LOCATIONS</b> DISTANT DISTRACTIONS</p> 	<p><b>ON LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>OFF LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>LOCATIONS</p> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<p>NOTES:</p> <input type="text"/>
<p><b>LEVEL 4</b> <b>REAL LIFE LOCATIONS</b> CLOSER DISTRACTIONS</p> 	<p><b>ON LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>OFF LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>LOCATIONS</p> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<p>NOTES:</p> <input type="text"/>
<p><b>LEVEL 5</b> <b>REAL LIFE LOCATIONS</b> REAL LIFE DISTRACTIONS</p> 	<p><b>ON LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>OFF LEASH</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>LOCATIONS</p> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<p>NOTES:</p> <input type="text"/>

# SUPER STRATEGY 2: REWARD STRATEGIES

It's important when working with any dog to have some strategies in place to back you up and prevent rehearsal of behaviours that you don't want. When it comes to growing your dog's loose leash walking skills, building their love of proximity and even just teaching them the most appropriate ways to walk on lead, these reward strategies are going to help you consider reward placement and will be super resources for you to have on hand to set both yourself and your dog up for success!

**Does your dog have a habit of forging ahead of you - and taking you on a walk?**

## REWARD BEHIND



**Is your dog's nose constantly on the ground and always sniffing?**

## REWARD UP



Does your dog have a habit of lagging behind and taking their sweet time?

## REWARD AHEAD



Is your dog always darting to the side - or from one side to the other?

## REWARD TO THE SIDE



## DOES YOUR DOG PULL AHEAD ON WALKS?

Don't worry, not only are there so many other people in the world that have this struggle with their dogs - that's right, you are not alone! - there are so, so many things you can do to turn this struggle around and take your walks from stressful to stress-free!

Remember, there is so much power in growing the concept of proximity when it comes to creating a dog who loves to be near you and can walk on a loose leash like you've always dreamed! Employing the strategies and games within this resource will take both you and your dog on an immense and joyful learning experience that takes all your leash walking struggles and turns them into super strengths!

**But the awesome fun and super learning doesn't stop here - this really is just the tip of the iceberg! If you want to dive deeper into teaching your dog not to pull on lead, check out our Sexier than a Squirrel podcast episode dedicated to just that!**

**Stop Pulling My Lead!**





# WALK YOUR DOG INSTEAD OF YOUR DOG WALKING YOU WITH THE POWER OF 3-MINUTE GAMES



Stress-free walks aren't a dream, they can be your everyday reality. Empower yourself and your dog through the power of games. It's time to transform your walks with a playbook that will kickstart your success. Printable, interactive and yours with just a click?

