

❀ PAWS-ITIVE PUPPIES ❀

LEASH WALKING FOR RELUCTANT PUPPIES

1. Don't ever drag with the leash or force a puppy to move.
2. Facing pup, squat down at the end of the leash/distance away, extend your arm, hand out, with your fingers together like you have a treat (real or imaginary, either one). Almost all pups will move forward to investigate. Pat/reward the pup. Then back up to end of the leash again and repeat gesture. You will make slow six foot progress down the street. (at least he's moving!)
3. Accept that your puppy needs time to examine and ponder his surroundings. Be patient. Don't worry about how far you travel on a walk, but the quality of the exposure to a stimulating environment while you are out. Even if you're not moving, you will see cars/trucks/buses going past, strangers/children walking by, bikes/skateboards/strollers passing, cats/other dogs/squirrels visible. All this is important socialization for your puppy.
4. Try walking with a "buddy dog". Often dogs will happily follow a walking canine companion. See if any of your neighbours are out walking their dogs when you want to, and ask if they mind the company.
5. 'Hire' a responsible child to walk two feet ahead of your puppy. Most puppies love children and will happily follow.
6. Try taking some treats along, throw them ahead on the sidewalk. Take a squeaky tennis ball or favourite or new toy, make some noise, sound happy and inviting and throw it in front of the puppy as an enticement to move forward.
7. Most reluctant pups are unwilling to travel in the direction away from home, but are quick to move towards home. If possible, carry the pup to the end of the street and walk home with him/her.

This behavior will not go away overnight. Usually it is a thoughtful or sensitive pup that is a bit overwhelmed by the environment and who needs time to ponder what is going on around him. Once he works it out in his own time, you will see a gradual improvement in confidence and movement. When he/she is six months old and dragging you down the street you will fondly remember when you couldn't get him/her to walk!