

# LEASH MASTERY IN 2 MINUTES A DAY

How To Instantly Stop  
Your Dog's Pulling



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## Introduction

For most dog owners, the leash turns into a game of tug of war, turning what should be a delightful walk with your best friend into a frustrating game of who pulls harder!

Instead of looking forward to walking your dog, you begin to dread it! Can you relate? I know I've been there before.

If you've experienced this struggle, you're certainly not alone. But, what if I told you that the key to leash mastery could be achieved in just two minutes a day? It might sound too good to be true, but with the right techniques and a dash of dedication, it's entirely possible.

Hello, I'm Ryan Gwilliam, and for the past 15 years, I've been on a mission to help dog owners, just like you, navigate the world of dog training with ease. Since 2007, I've trained more than 2,000 dogs, each with their unique quirks and personalities. From the furry companions of local news celebrities to the four-legged sidekick of an NBA player, I've had the privilege of guiding them all towards better behavior.

You might have caught some of my insights and methods on platforms like ABC and FOX. Yes, that was me sharing my love and expertise for all things canine! I've ensured that my techniques are rooted in well-respected knowledge and practices with a certification from the International Association of Canine Professionals (IACP), and by learning from some of the best trainers in the world like Joel Silverman, Marc Goldberg, Ivan Balabanov, and Ian Dunbar.

One thing I've learned throughout my career is that successful training doesn't have to be complicated. That's why I've perfected the art of breaking down lessons into simple, bite-sized chunks, both for your dog and for you!

And the secret sauce? Game play. By incorporating fun and engaging games into training, not only do you and your dog enjoy the process, but the lessons will stick!

So, if you're tired of feeling that burning in your shoulders during walks, you've come to the right place. In this book, I'll share my proven techniques to help you achieve leash mastery, ensuring that every walk becomes a pleasure, not a chore.

Let's get started!

## Chapter 1: Starting Simple – The Power of Training at Home

Picture this: you're handed a guitar for the first time and told to play in front of a big crowd. Scary and hard, right? Walking with your dog in a busy neighborhood is kind of like that. It's way too much, too soon.

Your neighborhood is full of things that grab your dog's attention:

- Cars
- Cats
- Squirrels
- Other dogs
- Sounds
- Smells

Plus, they are on their home turf with you! Their favorite person! It's natural for them to want to look out for you and let you know when they see or hear something interesting.

Keep in mind, when they pull on their leash, and you pull back, you're forming a bad habit between you and your dog.

Or, at the very least, they are learning to ignore the leash.

So, where's the best place to start? Right at home.

### Getting Started

1. Pick a Quiet Spot: Look around your house and find a quiet room. Maybe it's a bedroom or a living room during the quietest part of the day. This is your training spot. Make sure there aren't kids being loud or other pets around.
2. What You'll Need: Grab a six-foot leash and some yummy treats for your dog (soft treats work best). The leash will help your dog learn

about walking without pulling. The treats are for when they do a good job.

3. **Keep It Calm:** Before starting, make the room calm and quiet. Turn off loud TVs or music. Make sure you and your dog have as few distractions as possible.

By starting inside, your dog can learn without lots of distractions. They'll focus on you and what you're teaching. Once they get good at this, you can gradually begin adding distractions to challenge your dog's new abilities! In the next chapters, we'll talk about fun things you can do with your dog inside to help them learn. But for now, just remember, starting simple is the best way to go!

## **Chapter 2: The Stop & Go Game - Training Starts at Home**

Imagine you're learning to play the guitar. You wouldn't start by playing in a concert! First, you'd practice simple notes and chords at home. It's the same with teaching your dog not to pull on the leash. Before tackling the busy outdoors, you're going to begin with the Stop & Go game.

### **The Stop & Go Game Explained:**

The concept is simple: your dog learns to stay with you without making the leash go tight. When they succeed, they get a treat. If they don't, you'll stop, pause for a moment, give no treats or praise, and then try again. Here's how it works:

- **Pick a Spot:** Decide a spot in the room you're going to walk to. This is your goal.
- **Start Walking:** Begin walking to that spot. If your dog walks with you without pulling on the leash, say "yes" and give them a treat.

- **Watch the Leash:** If your dog starts to get distracted or the leash goes tight, just stop. No treat this time. Instead, pause for a moment, then start again.
- **Repeat in Rounds:** Think of your training as having several rounds. In a session that lasts 2 to 4 minutes, aim for about 10 rounds. It's okay if your dog doesn't get it right every time. If they succeed seven or eight times out of ten, that's great! But if they're always getting it right, it might be time to challenge them a bit more.
- **Staying Engaged:** Start your rounds with a prompt, like "Are you ready?" This gets your dog's attention. You want them to check in with you before you start moving. It's like getting in sync with your dance partner before hitting the dance floor.
- **Vary Your Speed:** Every dog is different. Some might prefer to walk slow while others might enjoy a brisker pace. For some energetic dogs, walking faster makes you more exciting. For more laid-back dogs, like an old bulldog, you might need to go slower or they'll lose interest in the game.
- **Add Variations:** As your dog gets the hang of it, start adding in turns, changes in speed, and other little challenges. The goal is to make yourself interesting. In this game, you're the fun one – the squirrel they want to chase. When they "catch" you (by walking with you without pulling), they get a reward.

### **Why This Works:**

Inside your home, you're the main attraction. There aren't squirrels or other distractions. You have treats, you're making fun movements, and you're engaging. This flips the script. Instead of your dog wanting to pull towards distractions outside, they want to be with you.

You are literally trying to ditch your dog, and your dog begins to think, “oh heck no, you can’t ditch me, I’m too fast”. And they’ll prove it to you! Talk about your dog’s attitude doing a complete 180 on how they feel about walking by your side! Seriously, this exercise is like a Jedi mind trick, it is gold!

Remember, everyone's eager to walk their dogs outside, but think of those outdoor walks as a concert where your dog shows off their new guitar skills. For now, we're just practicing those chords at home, building a foundation for success.

For a visual example of me training a couple of dogs on this exercise go here:

[Stop & Go Video](#)

## **Advancing the Stop & Go Game**

Once your dog gets the basics, it’s time to up the ante. It’s like moving from plucking single notes to playing more advanced chords on the guitar. Here’s how to level up the Stop & Go game:

### 1. Increasing Difficulty:

When you see your dog engaged and enjoying the game, make it a bit tougher. You might do this by adding more directions or speeding up your movements. If your dog is keeping up, you can use a longer leash or even practice off-leash.

### 2. Introducing Distractions:

Start integrating distractions like someone getting food out of the fridge, another dog in the room, or a child walking through. These distractions help simulate the eventual distractions your dog will face outdoors, preparing them to succeed in a variety of settings.

### 3. Varying the Routine:

Mix up your movements—go left, right, fast, slow. It keeps the game interesting for your dog, and they start to understand that being near you (specifically by your left leg) is rewarding. And the beautiful part? They don't even realize they're being trained!

### 4. The Ultimate Goal:

The essence of this exercise isn't about having your dog obediently stuck to your leg but about creating a harmonious relationship. You're building a connection where the dog wants to follow, wants to be with you. It's about enjoyment, about your dog thinking, "I like doing things with my human."

### Beyond Obedience: Building Cooperation

While this exercise lays a solid foundation for obedience, it's more about companionship. My end game isn't to have your dogs walk robotically beside you on walks. I'm not expecting them to maintain an obedience-style heel during a casual stroll around the neighborhood. I aim for a more relaxed, cooperative walk where the dog can sniff around, explore, but ultimately follows your lead. A dog who can make good decisions on their own, who can move together with you without being told to heel every step of the way, achieves a higher level of training. It's more natural and more enjoyable for both you and your dog.

### Starting the Advanced Training

If you're ready to begin this advanced level, pick a quiet, lower-distraction area—this could be your backyard, your driveway, or even your garage with the cars pulled out. Get their favorite treats ready and start the game.

### Share Your Progress

As you practice, feel free to share your progress in our community group. Whether you're celebrating small wins or needing advice on overcoming hurdles, we're here to support you. If something seems off, a video of your training session can be invaluable for pinpointing areas for improvement.

So, get to work, have fun with your dog, and let's build a joyful and harmonious bond together!

[Join My Facebook Group](#)

## **Chapter 3: Walking Side by Side - Line Work**

Teaching your dog to walk by your side is more than just a neat trick. It forms the foundation for many positive habits in the future. In this chapter, we'll delve into Line Work, a simple exercise that yields big results.

### Setting the Stage

To begin, gather two cones or markers and place them five big steps apart. This will be your practice line.

### Choosing the Right Environment

Start in a quiet room. Removing distractions helps your dog concentrate on you, the true star of this show. This early stage of undistracted learning makes future lessons in noisier environments much easier.

### The Line Work Game Plan

At its core, this exercise helps your dog understand the joy of walking right beside you. This simple act lays the groundwork for future off-leash adventures and ensures a more harmonious relationship when outdoors.

## **Let's Play Line Work**

- **Gear Up:** Strap a treat pouch to your left side. This becomes a clear visual for your dog. The leash stays in your right hand, but keep it relaxed and only about 4 feet long.
- **Using Treats Wisely:** Begin by letting your dog see the treat in your left hand. This motivates them to stay close. Over time, they'll stay by your side even without the treat being visible.

- **Walking Together:** Move between the cones, rewarding your dog when they maintain the desired position by your side.
- **The Right Turn Trick:** If your dog gets ahead of you, don't resort to pulling. Instead, turn to your right a couple of times. This acts as a reset and a gentle reminder for them to stay with you.
- **Repetition is Key:** Begin with short, frequent sessions. Early success, marked by plenty of treats, builds their confidence. As they improve, reduce the frequency of treats but always reward genuine effort.

## **Why Line Work Matters**

- **Building Trust:** Line Work is a trust-building exercise. When your dog chooses to stay by your side, it indicates they're relying on your guidance.
- **Preparing for Real-world Scenarios:** This indoor exercise is the first step in ensuring your dog behaves even amidst distractions outside, whether it's a squirrel or another dog.
- **Setting Boundaries:** Over time, a simple tug or a vocal cue will remind your dog of the Line Work game, making it easier to guide them back to your side during real-world walks.
- **Safety First:** A dog that's used to walking by your side is less likely to dash across streets or wander off, making hikes and walks safer.

By instilling this habit early on, you're not just teaching your dog to walk beside you. You're fostering a deep bond of understanding and trust that will make all future walks and adventures so much more enjoyable.

Here's a visual example:

[Line Work Video](#)

## **Adapting to Individual Needs**

Every dog is unique, and small tweaks are essential. Some dogs need to see that there are no treats in hand to settle down.

Getting feedback and tips that are personalized to you and your dog is crucial for addressing unique behaviors. Another thing that really helps is sharing videos of your dog in our community so one of our trainers can give you feedback and speed up your dog's progress.

So if you haven't joined the community already you might want to do that now:

[Join My Facebook Group](#)

## **Moving Together As One**

A milestone to get excited about is when you stop and your dog stops with you, right at your side, without any help from you or a treat. This syncing up between you and your dog underlines the magic of Line Work – harmony in motion.

When simple Line Work gets too easy, move on to doing figure eights around the cones. When that is too easy, ditch the line/pattern altogether and move around the room freely and enjoy having a dog who can do an obedience style heel with you! This is no small feat so enjoy this moment together! Praise your dog heavily at the end and have a little party together! After your dog can move around the room in any direction and stay in a nice heel, it's time to move this exercise outdoors!

## **Warming Up to the Outside World**

What we're doing here is preparing your dog for the real world. The indoor exercises are practice for the real deal. This way when the exercise moves outdoors, they have a clear picture of what is expected.

Pick a quiet place outside with minimal distractions and start the whole exercise over again (going up and down the driveway works well for most people as long as your street is quiet).

Remember to keep this short and sweet! Sessions should be no longer than 4 minutes. This will be a huge challenge for your dog, so expect them to do poorly the first day or two. But before long you'll be cruising around your front yard with a loose leash and a dog who is eager to not lose sight of you!

## **Chapter 4 - Stations**

Stations is a game where the key lies in making YOU the most exciting thing for your dog, just like a squirrel is to them when they're outdoors. Here's how it works...

Objective:

The objective of the 'Stations' game is to make your dog run from one station to another, perform a certain task, and then move to the next. The ultimate goal is for your dog to focus on the owner, making them more attentive and less likely to pull on the leash.

The Concept:

Dogs are often attracted to squirrels because of their unpredictable fast movements. In the Stations game, we aim to turn you into that squirrel, making your dog see you as something they need to focus on. This exercise might seem like it's all over the place, but it's designed to teach your dog to pay attention to you and follow your commands.

Execution:

**Station 1 (Dog Cot or Dog Bed):** Start by introducing your dog to the cot. Once they're comfortable, that becomes the first station.

**Station 2 (Bowl):** The dog has to put two paws up on a bowl. Upon performing the task, you move away quickly, making the dog follow you to the next station.

Station 3 (Rug): If you don't have another cot, a rug can act as the next station. The dog should come to the rug and wait for the next command.

Station 4 (Sitting): At this station, stand still and stare at the floor. The dog, upon noticing this cue, should sit.

Station 5 (Down): The most challenging station. Sit and stare at the floor, waiting for the dog to lie down. Initially, you can guide the dog into the position, but the aim is for the dog to offer the down without any help from you.

The Philosophy:

This exercise is about capturing behaviors. By rewarding the dog when they perform the desired behavior and ignoring them when they don't, you're teaching the dog what actions are favorable. Over time, dogs will understand that behaviors like sitting quietly or going to their bed get them the desired attention, whereas being naughty or pulling on the leash doesn't.

Tips:

- Avoid providing any attention, positive or negative, for unwanted behaviors. Ignoring the behavior is more effective.
- Be patient. Some dogs might take longer to understand the cues and the expected behavior.
- It's okay to guide your dog initially, but over time, you want the dog to perform tasks without any help from you.
- In future sessions, you can decrease the frequency of treats and use more verbal praise and physical affection.

## Mastering the Station Exercise: Think Like a Trainer

Using the station exercise is more than just getting your dog to sit at a particular spot. It's a stepping stone to understanding your dog and becoming an effective trainer.

Here's how it helps:

1. **Observation Skills:** Watching your dog approach, sit, or stay at their station will sharpen your observation skills. You'll pick up on subtle hints, like a twitching tail or perked ears, indicating their mood or understanding.
2. **Timely Rewards:** With the station exercise, you'll grasp the importance of immediate praise or treats. This instant feedback helps your dog connect their action with the reward, making them learn faster.
3. **Managing Distractions:** By introducing distractions during training and keeping them interested in you, you'll learn to handle real-life situations where distractions abound.
4. **Mindful Movements:** Every step or glance can impact your dog's behavior. This exercise will make you more aware of how your body language influences your dog's actions.
5. **Trust Building:** Consistently rewarding and directing your dog during the station exercise establishes trust. And with trust, you pave the way for quicker and more efficient training sessions in the future.

By mastering the station exercise, you're not just teaching a simple command. You're honing your skills, thinking like a pro trainer, and setting both you and your dog up for a successful training journey.

Conclusion:

The 'Stations' game is powerful in teaching your dog self-control, focus, and good behavior. With patience and consistency, this game can be a fun way to bond with your dog while training them effectively. Remember, the aim is to make yourself the most interesting thing in the room for your dog!

## **Chapter 5: Unlocking the Power of Training Tools**

In the world of dog training, tools often elicit strong opinions. From prong collars to gentle leaders, there are tons of options to choose from. It's crucial to understand that these tools, when used correctly, can be transformative. But like any powerful tool, in the wrong hands, they can do more harm than good.

### **The True Purpose Behind Tools**

Contrary to some beliefs, dog training tools like prongs, retractable leashes, Haltis, Gentle Leaders, slip leashes, clickers, e-collars, and Starmark collars aren't mean or evil. Instead, they serve as communication enhancers, clarifying signals between you and your canine companion. The key lies in understanding their proper use and the context in which they should be applied.

### **The Expert's Touch**

Venturing into the realm of dog training tools without guidance is akin to sailing stormy seas without a compass. It's not just about strapping a tool onto your dog and hoping for results. A professional trainer brings to the table their expertise, guiding you in the correct usage of these tools, ensuring not just effectiveness but also your dog's well-being.

### **Laying the Groundwork with Positivity and Encouragement**

Before diving into corrections, it's essential to instill the desired behavior in your dog through play and repetition. A tool should never be the first introduction to a new command or behavior. Establish the basics using positive methods, then utilize the tools to refine and perfect.

## Beyond Quick Fixes

A common pitfall is viewing these tools as magic wands, capable of instantly fixing behavioral issues. Tools are not replacements for foundational training. Instead, they enhance the communication, ensuring that the messages you send to your dog are crystal clear.

## Deciphering the Language of Corrections

Corrections, when applied appropriately, aren't about punishing a mistake. They're about clarity. It's a nudge, a reminder that says, "Try again, you're almost there." Whether you're using a prong collar, your voice, or just your body language, the intent remains the same: clear, constructive feedback.

## The Symphony of Combined Efforts

Picture this: a solid foundation built on trust and understanding, achieved through the exercises we've explored. Now, on this foundation, add the fine-tuning that training tools can provide. With a professional guiding your hand, the transformation in your dog can be both swift and lasting.

In my early days, I too sought the allure of a quick fix. But time and experience have taught me that mastery in dog training lies in blending foundational work with the precision of tools. As we continue this journey, always remember that the bond and communication you share with your dog are paramount. With patience, understanding, and the right guidance, you can achieve wonders.

## **Chapter 6: Why Field Work is a Game-Changer & How to Handle Neighborhood Walks Like a Pro**

We all want the same thing: a calm, happy dog walking next to us when we're out and about. I promise, by the time we're done, you'll be so much

closer to that dream. But first, let's chat about something really cool: playing with your dog in a big open field.

### Why Fields Are Awesome

Remember when we talked about being as fun for your dog as a squirrel is? There's no better place to do this than in a big field. If your dog learns to listen to you in a wide-open space, they'll find it much easier on a busy street.

### Field Work: Letting Your Dog Think for Themselves

Playing in a field is not just fun; it teaches your dog to think. Instead of you telling your dog what to do all the time, they learn to make good choices by themselves. They'll run around, but they'll also keep checking where you are, making sure you're still together.

### Happy Dogs Listen Better

Playing in a field makes dogs super happy; it gets all the wiggles out. And when they're happy, they want to listen to you more. So, the next time you ask them to walk nicely next to you on a busy street, they'll think, "Okay! You let me play in the field, so I'll listen to you now."

### See It in Action

Want to see how it works? I have a video of me training with a husky mix named Gorm.

If you want to watch, send me an email at [ryan@trainwalkpoop.com](mailto:ryan@trainwalkpoop.com) and say, "I want to see Gorm's 1st field session," and I'll send it to you.

Your dream of a calm walk is close! With field play, you're not just training; you're making your dog happy. And when you both understand each other better, magic happens.

## Navigating Busy Neighborhood Walks

### Stepping into a New Terrain

So, you've played in the field, and your dog is listening better. Great! But the true test comes in a bustling neighborhood. Here's a trick: don't start in your own neighborhood. Why? Your dog is extra protective there. By simply stepping a few blocks away, you change the game. The unfamiliar territory makes your dog more attentive to you, rather than what's "theirs."

### The Bubble Theory

Every dog has a personal bubble. Anything that enters this bubble can cause them to react or get distracted. This could be another dog, a person, or even a fast-moving skateboard. It's crucial for you to know where this bubble starts and ends. And the key to successful neighborhood walks? Keeping those distractions outside that bubble.

### Shrinking the Bubble

Take my dog, Batman, as an example. Initially, a skateboarder 150 feet away made him lose his cool. With consistent training, now it takes a skateboarder being just 15 feet away to make him a little anxious. He went from barking and lunging to slight whining. Similarly, where he used to get agitated with other dogs 30 feet away, now he calmly observes them walk by.

Every dog is unique. Your dog might be okay with a jogger but gets nervous around kids. Your mission is to recognize your dog's specific bubbles and work to shrink them, bit by bit.

### Setting Up for Success

Remember, training is a journey. The more you practice and the better you get at preventing your dog from being overwhelmed, the faster these bubbles will get smaller. So, for your early walks:

1. Choose Quiet Times: Begin your walks during quieter times of the day. Early mornings or late evenings might be ideal.
2. Distance is Key: Initially, keep a safe distance from potential distractions. This means crossing the street if needed or choosing routes with fewer dogs or people.
3. Celebrate Progress: Any reduction in your dog's bubble size is a victory. Celebrate those wins, no matter how small.

Walking with your dog in a bustling neighborhood doesn't have to be stressful. With patience, understanding, and the right techniques, those dreamy, calm walks are not just possible; they're within reach. Keep at it, and soon, your dog will be strolling by your side, relaxed and happy, no matter where you go.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion: A Journey of Connection and Understanding**

I promise that if you apply what you've learned in this book for 2 minutes a day for the next 90 days you'll have a whole new dog when you go on walks!

You now know the exact techniques my team of trainers uses everyday to accomplish just that!

Have fun playing and training with your dog and enjoy the results for life!

And just like that, we've reached the end of our journey together in this book! But, the path of learning and bonding with your dog never really ends. Before we close the book, let's take a moment to look back at the key lessons and how they can shape your journey ahead.

1. **Understanding Your Dog:** I began by emphasizing the importance of understanding your dog. Remember, seeing the world from their perspective helps bridge the communication gap.
2. **Foundation First:** I dove into the importance of foundational exercises, such as the station exercise. It's not just about getting your dog to sit or stay; it's about building trust and a shared language.
3. **Thinking Like a Trainer:** I discussed how exercises teach us to think like dog trainers. It's all about how your attention, body language, voice, and even eye contact influence your dog. With this awareness, you wield almost superpowers in guiding your dogs' responses.
4. **Building the Bond:** Remember how I talked about getting your dog to chase you like they would a squirrel? It's all about building that unique bond where your dog sees you as their partner in fun and adventure. The trust and understanding you develop here are the foundation of everything else.
5. **Know and Respect the Bubble:** Every dog has its own personal space or 'bubble'. Sometimes they get nervous or distracted when something (like another dog, person, or skateboarder) gets too close. By paying attention and taking things slowly, we can help them feel more at ease over time. Like with Batman's story, with some practice, those bubbles will get smaller.
6. **Field Work is Gold:** The joy of running freely in a field is something that will make your dogs' heart sing. It's more than just a fun activity. It will teach them to make smart choices and build understanding: "I respect what's important to you, and you respect what's important to me." This balance is the key to a happy dog-human relationship.
7. **Tools are Friends, Not Magic Wands:** I talked about various tools that can assist in training. But remember, these tools are there to help, not do the job for us. Used the right way, they can bring clarity. But it's always a good idea to ask an expert for guidance to ensure we're using them in the right way.
8. **Neighborhood Walks:** Starting in a quieter space and gradually introducing more distractions is the secret to enjoyable neighborhood

walks. By being mindful of not pushing your dog too hard and too fast, you can set them up for success.

In closing, remember that every dog and every human is unique. Your journey with your dog might be filled with ups and downs, but with patience, understanding, and the right techniques, you're now on the path to creating a beautiful bond. Here's to many happy, tail-wagging days ahead with your best friend!

### **Your Thoughts Matter to Me**

Will you do me a favor? Will you share your feedback with me? This will not only help me understand the challenges you face but also inspire me to provide better guidance and tools for other dog owners.

Do you have a story to share, a suggestion to make, or a question that wasn't addressed? Please, reach out! Hearing from you helps me help more dogs and their humans!

Connect with me directly at [ryan@trainwalkpoop.com](mailto:ryan@trainwalkpoop.com). Whether you're sharing a success story, providing constructive feedback, or just wanting to share a picture of your cute dog, I'm here to listen.

Our journey in this book might have reached its conclusion, but our broader adventure together continues. Your insights and experiences are the driving force behind that adventure, so let's keep the conversation going!

Wishing you and your dog the best life together,

Ryan Gwilliam

**SCAN TO LISTEN TO THIS AS  
AN AUDIO BOOK**

