

PAWSITIVE TIMES

A newsletter for folks who love their dogs!

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410-925-4038



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WHOA there, Max! **Why He Pulls...**

When walking your dog, have you ever had a stranger, in an attempt at humor, ask, "Who's walking who?"



Why *do* dogs pull on leash? Dogs pull because we teach them to! Besides being too slow and boring for our energetic pups, we inadvertently reward them for pulling by following them when they pull.

Think about it. When Sally takes her new eight-week-old pup Max out for his first walk, she stops to speak to the mailman. Max, bored standing around in the driveway, spots a bug and pulls to investigate. Still chatting with the mailman, Jane moves in the direction of Max's pull. Max gets to the bug and has a grand old time playing with it...and learns an important lesson: "pulling gets me where I want to go!" So who is training who?

Positive training methods, replacing the old-fashioned use of force and punishment, reward the dog for desirable behaviors and prevent him from being rewarded for undesirable ones. Leash walking manners are most effectively taught if walking politely with you is more rewarding than forging ahead to investigate the environment.

There are many wonderful training books available using positive methodology (visit www.dogwise.com)...or consult a trainer who uses these methods to help you teach your best friend that you *both* deserve to enjoy your walks!



TIPS TO



WINTERIZE YOUR DOG

Protecting your dog on your walks

- Prolonged exposure to frigid temperatures may lead to frostbite of unprotected areas (ears, paws, scrotum, and tail are particularly vulnerable), so make your walks short during the extreme cold.
- Short coated breeds need some added protection in colder temperatures, especially when the wind-chill temperature is low. A fleece lined coat with a waterproof outer layer will shield your dog from the cold and wind, as well as freezing rain, sleet and snow.
- Be careful of ice on the road – "black ice", an invisible thin layer of ice on asphalt, is especially dangerous.
- Ice balls may form between your dog's toes in icy, slushy areas, so check paws often.
- Chemicals, salt and sand used to melt snow and ice on streets and sidewalks may irritate your dog's feet. Always inspect paws at the end of a walk and wash off your dog's feet, legs and underside to remove any chemicals or salt that would be harmful to your dog if swallowed.



*"Dogs are not our whole life,
but they make our lives whole."*

Roger Caras



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FITNESS UNLEASHED

Getting in shape...together!

According to recent studies, approximately 40% of pet dogs are overweight or obese in the U.S. The statistics for humans are even more dismal, with nearly 80% of Americans “battling the bulge”. Both species deal with the health implications of weight problems - symptoms like heart disease, diabetes, aching joints, difficulty breathing, exercise intolerance, and an increased risk of cancer.

While a healthy diet plays an important role in weight control for both you and your dog, exercise is key to optimal weight loss and general health. If your physician has cleared you to exercise, and your veterinarian has given your dog the green light as well, it's time to get moving!

If you share your life with a dog, you are already living with the best exercise partner you could hope for - most dogs *love* to get outside with you and go for a brisk walk or run, or play games of fetch or chase that stimulate both their minds and bodies. Even on days when you are inclined to recline, the thought of disappointing your best friend by denying her a long walk is usually enough to motivate you.

In addition to improving fitness, daily exercise often results in a marked decrease in common dog behavior problems such as chewing, barking and house soiling. There is truth to the saying “A tired dog is a good dog!”.

Get a “new leash on life”. Follow your respective doctors’ advice on a healthy diet, lace up your walking/running shoes, snap the leash on your dog, and head out the door together... you both will lose some weight, gain some health, look better, feel better, have some fun, and vastly improve your quality of life. Not bad for simply “walking the dog”!



*"A man may smile and bid you hail
Yet wish you to the devil;
But when a good dog wags his tail,
You know he's on the level."*

Anonymous



Pawsitive Fit, LLC Puppy & Dog Training



Positive Methods for a Happy Best Friend

Pawsitive Fit offers private, in-home instruction in the Greater Baltimore area for people and their dogs. We are committed to using methods of positive reinforcement and reward, replacing the old-fashioned use of punishment, force and coercion. With individualized training programs tailored to your needs, Pawsitive Fit teaches you to effectively communicate with your dog, encouraging a relationship based on mutual trust and respect, and to have fun together while training.

Whether you need basic Good Manners training for your puppy or dog, or help with a specific behavioral problem, Pawsitive Fit can help. With flexible training options and scheduling times, our services are designed to meet the needs of busy clients who understand the importance of training their best friend.

For more information about our training and services, visit www.pawsitivefit.com

Happy training!

Susan Sarubin
Owner & Trainer
Pawsitive Fit, LLC

