

Protocol for dogs who refuse to walk on

Audit information

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Introduction

This protocol is recommended for your dog. Please do not share, copy or use for another dog as each individual case is different.

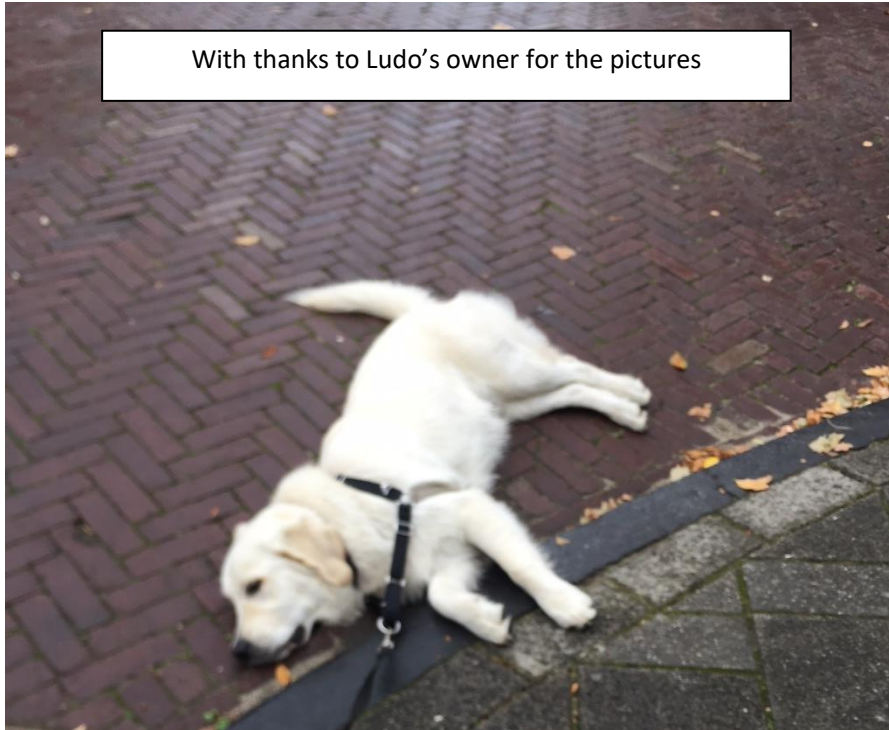
Several protocols are possible to tackle this. You could pick just one, or do them all if you like variation.

This exercise tackles the following problem: your dog refuses to walk on during a walk, and sits/lies down/draws himself behind.

Please ensure that there is no medical reason behind this behaviour before starting with this protocol, or that the reason the dog is blocking is not fear. This would need to be dealt with in a different way if fear is the reason.



With thanks to Ludo's owner for the pictures





Goal behaviour

A dog who no longer lags behind and, if he does, does so less durably. With exercises [Walk backwards](#) and [Stay there](#), the dog thinks it's HIS idea to join you, not your order. This tends to create more profound and reliable learning in dogs. If you are more comfortable with command-based training, you can try the [Follow my fist](#) exercise.

Time for training and time for management

Some habits are hard to drop and the more you work on them, the sooner you are rid of them. Also, the more often the dog gets to repeat them, the more deeply anchored they get. So it's extremely important to work on this frequently, and avoid any moment where you know the dog will be in trouble if you know you don't have time and are not in the mood for doing this exercise. This is what we call *management*. It won't resolve the problem, but it'll stop it from getting worse on occasions where you are confronted with the triggering situation and do not have time/energy/motivation for training.

Management in this exercise could be, for example, producing a piece of cheese or delicious chicken and placing it in front of the dog's nose BEFORE the dog usually puts on the breaks.

The exercises below are training exercise and, unlike management, they will resolve the problem if you do them often/consistently enough.

Using food in training

Please use mainly your dog's usual food when training, rather than more 'snacky' food. And please adjust his allowance so you do not end up overfeeding your dog through training.



Length of training sessions

Keep training sessions extremely short (1-2 minutes) and always end them on a good note. If your dog was struggling at the current level, for example, make sure you close the session on the level below, so the dog gets to be rewarded and comes into the next session feeling confident and motivated.

Walk backwards

1. If your dog suddenly bulks, walk backwards to the dog so that you are back to being next to the dog. You are walking backwards back to the position you would have held if your dog hadn't stayed behind, the normal walking position: next to the dog. In doing so, do not look at the dog, and keep the leash as tense as it was when the dog was pulling back. This reduces the chance that that dog sees stopping as a straight way of making you walk back to him, as a capitulation.
2. Once you are next to the dog, pretend to be busy with your mobile phone, your hand, a wall, whatever. Do not pay any attention to the dog.
3. Then, start producing a treat out of nowhere, as if you were on a scavenger hunt. Don't ask the dog to do anything with the treat. Just pretend to have found something fabulous, and only pay attention to that (the treat you've surreptitiously placed in a crack in the pavement, in the masonry of a wall, on top of a little pole, etc.)
4. As soon as the dog moves towards the treat, say 'yes' and let him enjoy it.
5. Then directly toss another treat forward, thus encouraging the dog to trot forward and keep up. You are not directing him to do so, he GETS to do so.
6. Thereafter, as soon as the dog makes eye contact with you, say 'yes' and then toss another treat, or pretend it's appeared out of nowhere. Make sure it's playful and suspenseful, or the dog will go into rote mode and you'll lose his interest again.
7. When he keeps looking at you, start only saying 'yes' when he was doing something else (e.g. sniffing the ground), and then looked at you. You are not asking the dog to look at you, the dog is choosing to.

Pro-actively keep up with steps 3-5 as long as you get the feeling that he'll otherwise be bulking. Only move on to 6 when you have enough momentum, generally after a few seconds or so.

Stay there

1. If your dog suddenly bulks, immediately get your phone out of your pocket and pretend to be furiously Facebooking/whatever it is you do with your phone. Walk backwards just enough so there is no more tension on the leash but stay roughly where you were. Do not join the dog. In doing so, do not look at the dog, do not talk to the dog, do not pull the dog. This reduces the chance that that dog sees stopping as a straight way of making you pay attention to him, as a capitulation.
2. After a few seconds of this, start producing a treat out of nowhere, as if you were on a scavenger hunt. Don't ask the dog to do anything with the treat. Just pretend to have found something fabulous, and only pay attention to that (the treat you've surreptitiously placed in a crack in the pavement, in the masonry of a wall, on top of a little pole, etc.)
3. As soon as the dog moves towards the treat, say 'yes' and let him enjoy it.
4. Then directly toss another treat forward, thus encouraging the dog to trot forward and keep up. You are not directing him to do so, he GETS to do so.



5. Thereafter, as soon as the dog makes eye contact with you, say 'yes' and then toss another treat, or pretend it's appeared out of nowhere. Make sure it's playful and suspenseful, or the dog will go into rote mode and you'll lose his interest again.
6. When he keeps looking at you, start only saying 'yes' when he was doing something else (e.g. sniffing the ground), and then looked at you. You are not asking the dog to look at you, the dog is choosing to.

Pro-actively keep up with steps 2-4 as long as you get the feeling that he'll otherwise be bulking. Only move on to 5 when you have enough momentum, generally after a few seconds or so.

Follow my fist

Do not move to the next phase unless you would be 50 euros the dog is proficient and reliable at the current phase.

Phase I

1. Start teaching this exercise at home, with no distraction.
2. Present your fist to your dog. Do not be intimidating in doing so. Just present your fist under the dog's chin, about 10 cm forward from the dog's face.
3. As soon as the dog sniffs on your fist, say 'yes'
4. Then remove your fist and toss it for the dog to chase.
5. Repeat from lots of different angles, so the dog nearly pounces on your fist whenever you do so.

Phase II

1. Again, work on this in an environment with no distraction, like home.
2. Say 'touch' and **count to one in your head**
3. Repeat steps 2 – 5 of Phase I.
4. Repeat, repeat, repeat until you get the feeling the dog understands the word 'touch'. To test this, say 'touch' and **count to two in your head**. You know your dog gets it when he looks for your fist when you've said it, even though your first isn't there yet.

Phase III

1. Again, work on this in an environment with no distraction, like home.
2. Say 'touch' and **count to one in your head**
3. Repeat steps 2 – 5 of Phase I, but leave your fist close to the dog's nose increasingly longer before you say 'yes'.
4. Wait until you sense the dog is about to detach his nose before you say 'yes'. Try to beat the dog to it, so that you've said 'yes' before the dog's nose detaches itself.

Phase IV

1. When the dog's nose is decidedly stuck to your fist when you've said 'touch', add movement. Once you've said 'touch' and the dog noses your fist, move your fist slowly away from the dog and test if the dog's nose stays stuck. Say 'yes' after ten centimeters are first, then gradually increase the distance.



Phase IV

1. This time, start working outside, but in a distraction-free environment (as much as that is possible). Something like your front yard.
2. Go through all phases again, but outside. Once he aces them all in this environment, it's time to try it in the environment that caused you to need that exercise in the first place.

Good luck!

Troubleshooting

1. If the dog won't sniff on your fist, you could add some food inside your fist, or say 'yes' as soon as he even looks at your fist, then gradually get pickier with your 'yesses' until you eventually only say 'yes' when he touches it with his nose.
2. If the dog will only touch your fist when you have food, then gradually reduce the amount of food you have in your fist, and make the first few fist bumps with little food REALLY worth the dog's while by surprising the dog with something particularly tasty (something that was not in your fist).
3. The dog doesn't seem to understand the word 'touch'. The problem is likely that you are already busy moving your fist/fiddling with treats before the dog has even processed that you've said 'touch'. Remember to always count to at least one before you do anything else, once you've said 'touch'.
4. The dog won't keep his nose stuck to my fist for any length of time. The problem is likely that you've tried to work in excessively big increments. GRADUALLY go up in duration. The maximum duration shouldn't really need to be more than a few seconds anyway.