



Follow Me Off Leash

Introduction

This is an exercise you can start in the home with your puppy even when they are very young. It encourages your puppy to move with you in whatever direction you are going and starts to build the foundations for walking nicely on a loose leash.

This can also be a fun, rainy-day, refresher exercise to do with your puppy once they are a little older!

How to Begin

We want our puppies to follow us around but at a very young age they do not have a lot of life experience or confidence relative to humans. We can start confidence building when they are first at home with us by doing some foundation work for puppy walks.

For this exercise, work inside your home and you do not need your leash or drag line.

It's a good idea to practice in a room that your puppy has already explored so there is less temptation for your puppy to wander off and investigate!

Keep this game very short and sweet to begin with, the aim is to end the game BEFORE your puppy wanders off on their own! You will need to exercise patience, so your puppy is making the choice to move with you.

- ☐ Stage 1 - Hold a treat in your hand, either squeeze between your fingers or with your thumb flat against your palm so you have a flat hand. Lower your hand to your puppy's level, so they can investigate your hand. Take two small steps, reward. The goal here is to have your hand positioned so your pup is in heel position (parallel to you along your left side) and getting the reward in that position. Your flat hand will become a physical cue for your pup to follow. Repeat this a few times each day until your puppy is able to follow you for two steps without getting distracted.



- ☐ Stage 2 - Do exactly the same as above, but now have your puppy follow you for five small steps and then reward. Repeat this a few times a day until your puppy is able to follow you for five small steps without getting distracted.
- ☐ Stage 3 - Still without a leash or dragline, working up to 10 steps before you reward a few times a day.
- ☐ Stage 4 - Once your puppy follows you for 10 steps or so you can practice this in different rooms in your house. Remember though, when you move to a different room, it's a new environment for your puppy with different distractions, so you may have to go back to fewer steps to begin with.
- ☐ Stage 5 - Once your puppy will happily follow you around, off leash, for 10 steps or so in multiple rooms of your house, you can move onto the next exercise:

Puppy Walks on Leash and Walks to Nowhere in the Home