

Preparation for Puppies in Dog Shows

Learn how to start your puppy early into the dog show life.

Many successful show-goers have their own preferences as to how to introduce a lead, and a great deal will depend upon the tractability of your own puppy. You want him to concentrate on the task at hand, so, once again, ensure that there are no distractions. Use a flat area, free of clutter, preferably without too many interesting aromas. Your puppy must associate his lead with pleasure, so you must be in a happy frame of mind. Always remember that your own positive or negative emotions will travel down the lead to your pup!

If your puppy is bewildered by the whole affair and just stands still, hold the end of the lead and move, in backwards fashion, to the leads length, so you are in front of the puppy with the length of the lead between you. Then encourage him to come toward you, giving a gentle tug on the lead if necessary. Give him encouragement throughout the process, and you may want to reward him with a little tidbit when he has reached you successfully. Always give him lots of praise when he comes to you. Never practice for too long at a time, but for several short sessions each day.

Should yours be a puppy that prefers to scamper about when the lead is attached, he is unlikely to respond readily to the aforementioned method. Because he is clearly not at the stage when you can actually lead him anywhere, let him take you. Follow him wherever he wants to go (within reason), all the while holding the end of the lead firmly, but not restraining him in any way initially. If he suddenly realizes that you are at the end of the lead and puts the brakes on, you can try to gain his confidence by encouraging him to come toward you using the previously described method. Little and often is again the motto, and in two or three days you should find that you are able to lead him about.

Once you have some control over the puppy on lead, you can begin to teach him to walk politely with you. Give a gentle tug on the lead, encouraging the puppy to walk next to you on your left-hand side, for this is the side on which he will usually be gaited in the show ring. Don't expect miracles at first, for he would probably prefer to travel in the opposite direction. Provided you keep his confidence at all times, though, using his name, which he should recognize by now, he will soon progress. Never shout at your puppy, and don't be afraid to use a rather foolish-sounding high-pitched tone if that seems to help. If you can overcome your embarrassment now, you will find it much easier to make your entrance into the show ring later on.

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