

# Train With Bane



## LOOSE LEASH LIBERTY

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How I Taught Bane To Walk On A Loose Leash While Still Allowing Him To Explore

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*Bare*

# Introduction



## Loose Leash Liberty

How I taught Bane to walk on a loose leash while still allowing him to explore

As far as I can make out, walking on a loose leash either consists of teaching your dog a pseudo-heel, where they must remain by your side and be constantly paying attention to you in order to do so; or you are supposed to stop walking when you feel tension in the leash and start again when you don't a.k.a. the 'traffic light system'.

Loose Leash Liberty is different...it's all about letting your dog sniff and explore i.e. not having to be beside you all the time, but not pulling you around either. However, because your dog will have the freedom to explore, at times they *will* reach the end of the leash, and that's ok. It's all about what they do when they get there...do they yield to that leash tension, or pull because they feel it's a restriction that's preventing them from getting to where they want to go!

**...let's get started!**

# Tip #1

## Understanding Leash Pressure

Teach your dog to understand and respond to leash tension - meaning, instead of pulling harder when they hit the end of the leash, they should learn to ease off and move in *towards* the tension. In other words, when the leash tightens, they should naturally back off rather than dragging you along.

1. Begin in an easy, low-distraction environment.
2. When your dog reaches the end of their leash **don't** follow them. Hold your ground.
3. Very gently, start to lean back or creep backwards to encourage your dog to turn towards you. Don't say anything at this point.
4. As soon as you see any movement that indicates they're turning towards you (which could even be just the slightest movement of their head) mark with a word (I use "Good") and then encourage them back to you using praise.
5. As you do this, **slowly** walk backwards so they have to 'catch you' but make sure you don't accidentally apply any leash tension. Keep praising them.
6. When they reach you give them a treat and a fuss.

# Tip #2

## Adding The 180

Once you've spent some time teaching your dog to automatically turn towards you when they feel any leash tension, you can move on to this step.

Let your dog reach the end of their leash and turn towards you (as in step 1). Keep slowly walking backwards and as they reach you, spin 180 degrees so that you are still travelling in the same direction, but now facing forwards. This means your dog will go from being in front of you to behind you.

Keep walking in any direction until they run out of leash and repeat the process. This shouldn't look the finished 'walk'...it's just a step to introduce walking together on a loose leash.

To begin with, make sure you're facing your dog when you start to creep backwards i.e. if they are at the end of their leash at your 9 o'clock, turn 90 degrees to your left to face them and *then* start to slowly walk backwards. As they turn towards you, make sure you keep your hand out in front of you so that the leash goes slack.

# Tip #3

## Up & Down

Now that you've taught your dog to move in towards you when they feel leash tension, and you've practised in random directions, it's time to make it feel more like a 'dog walk'.

Do as you did in the previous steps but once you've done your 180 degree spin, take only a few steps forward and then start to walk backwards instead (you should be retracing your steps i.e. walking in a straight line 'Up & Down').

As your dog turns to follow you, praise them in and then do another 180 spin, take few steps forward and then start to walk backwards again, and so the process repeats itself.

Practising this will allow you to remain in a straight line and at the same time, your dog will be practising walking on a loose leash. Your dog will also (inevitably) reach the end of the leash at some point, and will then have the opportunity to practise moving in towards the tension, instead of pulling (opposing it).

# Tip #4

## Inside Turns

The next step is to add inside turns. For the purposes of this explanation, I will assume your dog is on the left.

Begin by practising Step 3: Up & Down, but instead of walking backwards after a few paces, do the usual 180 spin, take a few paces forward and then turn left (with your dog on the inside). Make sure they are slightly behind you when you do this so that you don't crash into them. Ideally, their head should be level or just behind you, so that they can move out of the way and make the turn with you. If you leave it too late and their front paws or body are level with you, just switch to walking backwards as we did in step 3. Once they've followed and you've done your next 180 spin you can try again for an inside turn.

Teaching this turn is a really great way to discourage constant overtaking and leash pulling. Remember though, we're not actually looking for 'heel style' walking...rather just an improved awareness and the ability to move into towards you when they feel leash tension (which teaches your dog to 'turn off' the tension).

# Tip #5

## Outside Turns

‘Outside turn’ is really just fancy way of doing the ‘walking backwards’ that we practised in step 2.

Begin as before but instead of turning left (with your dog on the inside), turn right so that they can follow you on the outside of the turn. It’s kind of like doing the 180 on a curve (instead of just walking backwards and then spinning).

Once you’ve done your right hand turn (with your dog on the outside), use the inside turn at the other end of your straight line. This will gradually allow you to morph the straight line (up & down) you’ve been practising so far, into a figure of 8. And again, this will allow you to morph *that* into normal, regular dog walking.

Now that you’ve got a figure of 8, inside turns, outside turns, and your dog knows how to turn leash tension off, you just need to **consistently** put that all into practice. If your dog does pull, hold firm and creep backwards until they move into towards you. Over time, they will get better and better.

# Tip #6

## The 'Handbrake'

This is the final step and is somewhat like the 'traffic light' system, but with the missing ingredient added (and this makes ALL the difference). The main problem with the traffic light system is that your dog stops out in front of you, learns to back off a few centimetres so the leash feels slack, but as soon as you start to walk again they're still out in front and pretty much run out of leash instantly.

The 'handbrake' is typically useful to teach your dog to walk by your side, but it can be useful for our Loose Leash Liberty too.

As your dog starts to overtake you, gently pull the leash upwards until your dog stops. Now here's the SECRET: don't hold them in position. As soon as they've stopped, relax the leash and if they begin to walk forward again, gently pull up again until they stop. Keep repeating this until the relaxation of the leash is no longer a signal to move forward.

Once you've got this down, slowly take one step forward (after they've stopped and you've relaxed the leash). Again, if that causes your dog to start walking, gently pull up so that they stop, then relax the leash and repeat the process. You're looking for your dog to wait until you're level with them before they start to walk again. That way, the relaxation of the leash pressure no longer signals that they can move forward.

I hope you found this guide useful. Teaching your dog to acknowledge the end of the leash not only makes your walks more enjoyable for you AND your dog, it also makes you a team! And because of that, it becomes the doorway to improved listening, impulse control, obedience around distractions etc.

Thanks for reading.