

The purpose of this exercise is to help a dog become familiar with the leash and allow leashing without fear. Before starting this exercise, the dog should be very comfortable having its collar reached for and touched.

You should not spend more than about 5 minutes per session on this exercise. Multiple short training sessions will be most effective.

Before beginning, you should have a treat bag full of small, bite sized treats that you know the dog loves.

Do not start **Leashing** until you have completed all levels of **Collar Grab** and a positive relationship has been established with the animal.

How to Begin

Tip: Be ready to take out the leash or make the leash disappear at a moment's notice.

Level 1

Approach the dog without the leash exposed (either hidden behind your back or in a pocket). Expose the leash to the dog by holding it in one hand close to your body while feeding the dog with the opposite hand. Feed them for between 3-8 seconds while the leash is out. After 3-8 seconds, make the leash "disappear" and stop feeding treats at the same time.

If you notice discomfort from their body language or they are not eating treats, put leash away and leave on a positive note by leaving a few treats on the ground. If the dog is taking treats then continue doing repetitions for various amounts of times (3-8 seconds) and with different intervals between repetitions.

Sequence of Level 1 events

- Leash comes out (no approach)
- Treats start (3-8 seconds)
- Leash goes away and treats stop at the same time
- 5-10 second break

Continue at Level 1 until the point that you take the leash out and the dog has a positive conditioned emotional response (CER).

Level 2

Approach the dog with the leash exposed. Slowly bring the leash from your body to within 2.5 feet of the dog (Or whatever distance is within their threshold) and begin treating. When the treats begin, the leash stops moving. If the dog shows any behaviors indicating stress or fear, back up a step and make it easier for them.

Sequence of Level 2 events

- Leash approaches dog

-Leash stops moving and treats start (3-8 seconds)

-Leash goes away, treats stop

-5-10 second break

Continue this exercise from 2.5 feet (or threshold) until the dog is showing a positive emotional response to the leash approaching them.

When you see this response, repeat the Level 2 process at the following distances in order:

2.25 feet; 2 feet; 1.75 feet; 1.5 feet; 1.25 feet; 1 foot; 10 inches; 8 inches; 6 inches

Tip: If you move the leash while the dog is eating, the treats have turned into a bribe rather than a reinforcement for the leash approach, so it is important that the leash stops moving when treats are being offered.

Level 3

Allow the dog to investigate the leash and allow them to approach. One way you can get them interested in the leash is by putting some cream cheese or peanut butter on the hook and allowing them to lick it off completely. Do this about 15-20 times or until the dog is readily approaching the hook as you present it. If you see any signs of fear or stress, go back a step or end the interaction on a positive note.

Level 4

Now we want to start pairing the sound of the hook clip with the treats as well as the visual component of the leash approaching.

Part 1-Before introducing the visual component, we will start with just the sound while the leash remains behind your back. Start standing two feet away from the dog with the leash behind your back, make the noise the clip would make (Pull back and release clip hook to make sound) and treat the dog at the same time it makes noise. Do this at the following distances in order, making sure you are getting a positive CER before progressing to the next distance.

2 feet; 1.5 feet; 1 foot; 6 inches

When you start to receive CER from 6 inches, move on to part 2, showing the dog the leash while making the clip noise and ultimately clipping the leash to the dog's collar.

Part 2- Start standing 2 feet from the dog. Pull the leash out from behind your back to in front of your body. Make the hook clip noise and treat the dog at the same time it makes noise.

Tip: Timing is very important in this step to ensure the dog associates the treat with the sound of the leash, instead of the leash approaching or disappearing.

Do this at the following distances in order making sure you are getting a positive CER before progressing to the next distance.

2 feet; 1.5 feet; 1 foot; 6 inches; 3 inches; 1 inch; clipping collar.

Sequence of Level 4 events

- Leash approaches within threshold
- Leash stops Moving
- Pull back and release clip hook to make sound and Treat
- Leash Goes Away

Tip: This Stage will require a lot of patience and it is best to work short successful sessions with high rates of reinforcement. The dog should be focused on the handler and not have hard eyes on the leash. You may reach a plateau when you are going beneath the dog's chin. If this happens, tell a trainer and you may be advised to return to DSCC Collar Grabs to get the dog comfortable with you reaching around their neck.

Level 5

Once the dog is able to be hooked and clipped, you can start working on the dog getting used to wearing the leash. During Level 5, you will never touch the actual leash, but instead hold it by the clip.

Clip the leash to the dogs collar and **continuously** treat the dog the entire time the leash is clipped on. Do not hold/touch the leash, instead let it hang on the floor. When you unclip the leash, the treats will stop.

Do this for the following durations in order, making sure you are getting a positive CER before progressing to the next duration. Each time you remove the leash, rest for one minute before starting your next one.

2 seconds; 4-5 seconds; 7-8 seconds; 10 seconds. Sequence of Level 5 events

- Leash the dog and start treating immediately
- Treat the entire time the leash is attached to the dog
- Take the leash off, treats stop
- Leash Goes Away

Reminders:

While treating the dog, the leash should not be moving. To the dog that movement can be scary and may make them more wary when you approach again.

- Be mindful of the dog's body language. Try to keep track of what stimulus is pushing them beyond threshold and try to pinpoint it so that you can DS/CC to that specific stimulus. It can be the collar grab, the sound, the approach, or possibly a combination of different things. It is easier and sometimes necessary to address each stimulus separately.
- Don't loom over the dog at any time. Approach the dog from the side with your side/back to them. Stay low and slow and keep your hands visible to the dog as much as possible.
- Work at the dog's pace. Their responses to each session and individual repetition should dictate when you move on and when you need to move back a step.