

“Training Dogs Together”



**ALLEGIANT
CANINE**

**“Dogs Are Smart!
We Need to learn to Speak Dog!”**

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Lesson 1, Part 1: “Intervention”

Negative Punishment: Removal of a pleasant stimulus to decrease a behavior

7 Rules for Life

These 7 Rules are how Allegiant Canine produces such immediate, long-lasting results. Today, we are going to show you how to rid your dog of naughty behaviors and replace them with good ones. The behavior building in obedience will come over the next 2-3 lessons. In the meantime, what are some things that we can STOP, START, and CONTINUE that will make an impact today? My mindset going into this lesson is “What can we do in 2 hrs that will be extremely productive?” A personal trainer is going to teach me the best diet and the most effective fat burning exercises...the muscle will come with time. Today, that’s what we’ll be doing is “trimming the fat” a bit by changing the inputs that we give to our dog through resources.

Dogs are resource-aware creatures. They pay attention to even the most subtle change in schedule, protocols, and paradigms and how it affects their place in the family. You are a human, not a dog or a wolf. Your dog is not actually your child; they are a dog. You don’t need to be the “Alpha” in the same sense that a wolf would be. BUT that doesn’t mean your dog shouldn’t respect you. Sometimes, I raise my voice, am willing to put on a firm correction, or do something that may seem unfair to an outside observer. But they don’t have to live with my dog! You should have executive say in everything your dog does, but you don’t have to act controlling to be in control. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. You should have word power with your dog. That said, each of these rules pertains to a different resource, and by controlling the resources, we have leverage to build and end behaviors. Don’t believe me? Check this out...

Rule 1: Ignore the dog for 3-5 mins when coming in the door, no matter how long you were gone.

Believe it or not, YOU and your FAMILY are the primary resource for your dog because you have the sentience to control all the other gateways to reinforcement. As the gatekeeper, you are able to allow or deny any influence that may help or hinder your dog’s development. If you’re giving away excessive eye contact, physical touch, and spoken word to your dog, they will become entitled to it, addicted to it, and this is where we see separation anxiety, insecurity, and weakness start to creep into our dog’s mindset. If you instead leverage your attention, affection, and words for good, your dog will find that it is the primary reinforcer above all things. They will be eager to please, proactive, creative, innovative, independent, and confident!

Rule 2: Crate the dog while unsupervised for the next 30 days.

FREEDOM is the second most significant resource because it allows the dog to start making decisions on their own. It’s estimated that dogs sleep about 18-20 hrs a day! Lucky! When COVID hit, everyone and their dog were Working From Home (WFH). During this time, we saw a huge increase in reactivity, separation anxiety, and nuisance behaviors. Why? Because at least one person was always home, so they thought it was mean to crate the dog. The need for the crate was out the window in their minds. Now the

dogs were free to make decisions on their own, and they don't always choose correctly. Through rehearsal, dogs can get better at bad behaviors. Our hope is that by dilution, we are able to tip the scales in your favor. If you want to have a dog with real Freedom, train them! There's nothing more liberating than having a well-balanced, off leash trained dog!

Rule 3: Don't announce events that the dog is emotionally unprepared to handle.

FEELINGS are a resource that we may not think about a lot, and I cannot count how many times I have heard that we must remain objective and not involve emotion in dog training. This is just false. Dogs have evolved to be able to read our facial expressions, happy, sad, excited, calm. And they are a mirror to us. If we show them a happy face, their tail wags. If we show them a scornful face, their head drops, and their tail tucks. If you play at your dogs' emotions when you're not ready for the arousal level that follows, you're setting them up for failure and correcting behaviors that flow out of our own hype! Instead, we can save these emotions for times when the dog finally did that thing that we wanted them to do. Or when they don't. They need to know the intensity of our pleasure and our pain so that we can channel their eagerness to please into desired behaviors and out of the naughty ones.

Rule 4: Feed the dog one meal out of a bowl per day for 5 mins, and one meal via shaping.

FOOD is a pretty obvious reinforcer for dogs. Even still, I hear all the time, "My dog isn't super food motivated." Usually, the reason is that they are overfed, allowed to graze all day, given human food at the table, etc. If we are serious about training, controlling food intake is very important. I typically also ask clients to fast their dog before a session so that we can do some shaping to get started. For my own dogs, I put the food down, and they gobble it up. I want that. Don't get a slow feeder unless your vet says you have to. They will end up becoming professional eaters from the slow feeder soon enough. It's like when a client tells me their harness stopped their dog's pulling, and they don't need training anymore. "See ya in a couple weeks!" is my reply because as soon as the novelty wears off, they are going to inhale food just as fast as before. Choose a good quality Kibble, even if you feed raw, for training so that we can actively work the dog without risk of contamination.

Rule 5: Pick up all toys except for one enrichment and one engagement toy.

FUN FUN FUN! Toys can be an entertaining tool for our dogs' enrichment. But that doesn't mean that we have to have every toy under the sun. There are so many companies that will send you 4-5 toys a month because they assume that your dog will destroy them all. Most of them are crap, and we're letting our dogs destroy and even consume them! Hello red flag! I have 8 dogs. Each one of my dogs has two toys: an enrichment toy, and an engagement toy. Enrichment toys include puzzles and chews. These might include Bully Sticks, Kongs, Benebones, or Snuffle Mats. These are usually going to be in the dog's crate to redirect stress onto when they are "in their feels" and need to channel a bit. Engagement toys are ones that you're on the other side of. Frisbees, Balls, Ropes, or a combination of the three. Chuckit, FoamDogBalls.com, and Kong all make great engagement toys. If you have a working line dog, you can be the toy – get a bite suit

from Leerburg or Ray Allen! If you don't know what your dog enjoys, it's very likely you need to learn the "Language of Play." If your dog has no interest in toys, you just need to learn how to make it alive!

Rule 6: Do not allow your dog to meet or be met by just any human or dog.

FRIENDS can be hugely reinforcing for a dog, but over-socialization without boundaries can be their greatest downfall. My personal dogs are not BFFs with every single dog they meet, just like you and I are not friends with every human we meet. What if I walked down the street and greeted every single stranger I passed? "Hi I'm Matty! Hey there, I'm Matty! "Hello friend, I'm Matty!" That would be weird right? So why are we allowing our dog to approach and engage with dogs and people who we know nothing about? And why aren't we advocating for them when a stranger tries to engage without our permission? Puppies are usually super friendly, but anxious introductions in puppyhood can turn into defensive, reactive explosions in sexual and social maturity as the dog approaches 1 and 2 years, respectively. It's not all about "Socialization;" it's about Exposure & Generalization. There are some dogs and people that are not relevant to us. Doggy Daycare, Dog Parks, Patio Restaurants with free roaming dogs...you get the picture. Advocate for your dog by staying away from situations where people and dogs can just run up and greet themselves. Supervise play, set boundaries, and enforce them.

Rule 7: Say Commands One Time!

FINAL WORD POWER is everything in dog training because this embodies the entire construct that we tie to the behaviors we want! A trained dog is one who knows the behavior (acquisition), what it is called (fluency), that they have to do it (urgency), and they have to *keep* doing it until released (permanency), in any environment (adaptation), and within all contexts (generalization). But what happens when we don't get the response we are looking for or when the dog breaks the command? We repeat it again, and again, and again, until the dog is worn out and offers it as a consolation prize for our "efforts." This is not dog training. It's a bastardization of real dog training. And like most knock offs, it's cheap, ineffective, and weak. Conversely, what we want is precision, productivity, and potency in our words. What we want is a dog that knows we have that final word power. You are the executive decision maker. Whether or not the dog acts like it now, they need you to take the leadership position through your spoken word, and that all starts with excellent training, supervised by a coach, for a lifetime commitment.

The Mystery of Dog Training

Anyone who claims they know everything about dog training is a liar or a lunatic. In my experience, the best trainers in the world have the mind of a student, the heart of a teacher, and the soul of an adventurer. We are always trying to get better, whether it's in sport dogs or pet dogs, shepherds or Shih Tzu's. We're always trying to understand more deeply their emotions and motivations. And without fail, we are attempting to incorporate them into more advanced fields as a result. Dogs can be policemen, astronauts, lifeguards, and even Uber drivers! Okay just kidding on that last one, but there is a driving school for dogs in New Zealand!

What does that mean for you and your dog? Dogs are a lot smarter than they let on, and we have a greater capacity to communicate with them than ever in human history. We have shared our story with dogs for

26,000 years; our hands are literally made for holding leashes! I've been training for 15 years now, and if there's one thing that I have learned, it's that you, the owner, the steward, the pet parent will be the primary beneficiary of this training. The dogs learn it all very quickly. It's the human side that needs reminding. After all, "Properly trained humans can be a dog's best friend."

While every dog is unique in their levels of drive, gameness, and ability, they are all capable of *more*. Whatever that means for your dog, we're here for it. Our belief is that dogs are highly intelligent, and our goal is always to train the dog in front of us, not to impose drills and exercises on a dog who doesn't need them. But there are some principles that seem to be standard across the board with all dogs. Those are the ones we're going to teach you as a foundation. Even though there are not any supernatural dog training techniques (that we know of), it can often seem magical and mystical when someone has an expert level of skill communicating with and handling canines. At Allegiant Canine, we're not gurus or prophets or "dog whisperers." We are just people making a living by helping you forge a life of awesomeness with your dogs. Are you ready for the secrets?

(To be honest, they are nothing crazy or sexy, and if there was a show on actual dog training it would be boring a.f. But we're going to lay them all out for you here. Try not to fall asleep. I attached videos to each of the headings.)

Lesson 1, Part 2: The "Secret" Fundamentals of Dog Training

Positive Reinforcement: Adding a pleasant stimulus to increase a behavior

First, we build or "shape" behaviors using MARKERS/BRIDGES. These are the words that tell the dog whether they are right and wrong and where they will receive their payment or penalty. The reason dog trainers call them a bridge is because they connect the behavior with the consequence, allowing us to eventually fade out rewards and corrections. If you don't always want to have to carry a slimy ball or a treat pouch around, pay close attention.

These marker words indicate the exact moment in time that the dog is about to be paid (or punished) for. Markers can fall under any of the senses, but to keep it simple, for hearing dogs, we use auditory markers. In this section, we will address Positive Markers. You can thank Ivan Pavlov for the discovery that dogs conditioned to a bell would salivate if they heard the bell several times before a feeding. This is called classical conditioning.

Positive Markers

Bridge words between behavior and payment that allow us to gradually fade out payment.

- Break – Dog released away from you for payment
- Yes – Dog comes to you for payment
- Good – Move to dog for payment (Treat, Toy, Touch). Builds implied stay.

- Free – All done, go sniff, potty. The release *is* the reward.

For this to work, you wait for the behavior you're targeting, speak the marker word, and then pay with treat, toy, or touch. The marker word should be said before not during the payment event. I see a lot of young trainers marking and paying at the same time. This causes "overshadowing" where the dog never learns the marker because they are distracted by the primary reinforcer. Again, if you want to fade out that reward, if you want accurate obedience, and if you want clarity for your dog, you'll mark *then* reward.

Now, I'm not going to get into it in depth here, but there's a hierarchy in shaping that tends to be very natural for dogs that we as dog trainers have to be aware of in order to create a strong foundation:

- Charging Markers – teaching the communication system of marker words
- Free Shaping – teaching the dog to offer freely, which encourages creativity by paying the dog...
 - Fixed Ratio – after X amount of offerings, progressing upward
 - Variable Ratio – after a random number of offerings, randomizing
 - Fixed Interval – after a certain duration holding behavior
 - Variable Interval – after a random duration holding behavior
- Assisted Shaping – guiding the dog through luring and pressure to a behavior

Negative Reinforcement: Removal of an unpleasant stimulus to increase a behavior

Once behaviors are built, and the dog is *loving* offering them, we word association the COMMAND/PROMPT/CUE so they develop "fluency" in this new shared language. Then, and only then do I start using that command. At first, it may come as a whisper, then a hushed tone, then voiced, then shouted if needed at a distance. This all happens in a progression.

- I say the command and then guide the dog to it if they need help.
- I say the command and wait, then turn on pressure after 2 seconds
- I say the command and turn on pressure after 1 second
- I say the command and pop after 2 seconds
- I say the command and pop after 1 second
- I say the command and the dog offers.

Commands List

Remember, when using commands, you should only word associate when the dog is loving offering the behavior. For dogs, the behavior always comes first, then the word association. Build it, Name it, Proof it. The most common commands that we will teach will be as follows. Remember that you can use your own markers and your own commands. Everything is customizable to the handler.

- Here/Come – come into my space, stay close
- Let's Go – follow with me on the leash
- Heel – a focused, loose leash walk
- Place – lay down in your bed, stay away
- Crate – go into kennel with no conflict or barking
- Sit – butt on the ground

- Down – tummy on the ground
- Up – jump into car, onto a tall platform
- Stand – all four on the floor

Positive Punishment: Adding an unpleasant stimulus to decrease a behavior

Then, if the dog breaks the behavior, I use a marker word “No” and give a correction, the dogs redirects back to the original behavior, and I *might* mark and pay it one time and release them before the post-reinforcement pause kicks in and they get bored. Then we do it again. This time, if they get up, it’s just Negative Marker “No” – Correction – Redirection – No Marker, No Reward. You wouldn’t pay your kid \$1 for returning a stolen candy bar. But you might tell them that you love them and they don’t need to steal for a candy bar – they just need to ask politely. When you’re the source of all good things – again – your dog sees even correction as love. Clarity goes up, confidence goes up, and as a result, their level of freedom can go up because they earned it!

Correction as a possibility is something that is going to do a lot for your dog. It boosts clarity of exactly what you want, and it saves you a most valuable resource: TIME. The more that the dog rehearses a behavior, or thinks they can rehearse a behavior, the longer the behavior will take to go extinct. If there’s one thing that I pick on +R, Positive-Only, Force-Free trainers for, it’s their use of time. You as a dog owner don’t have six months to train a dog to not jump on people, attack animals, bark incessantly, or hump your grandma’s leg. Your goal is to get as much done, as soon as possible, while building the confidence and self image of the dog and retaining their sweet personality. The lie that correction destroys your relationship with the dog has gone on too long. It is false.

Try it. Correct your dog the next time that you say “No” about something, and just watch what happens. Inevitably, the dog will offer some form of redirection, whether it be a submissive, apologetic tail wag, or a sit with eye contact. The next time that your dog jumps on you, calmly say “Off” and pop your knee out to push the dog off you quickly. If you have done any level of training with the dog, they will fall down right into a sit and give you the best attention you’ve ever had. I have never once seen a dog’s relationship with their owner suffer because of a fair, well-timed correction.

Today, we feel like the PC police are going to come after us for putting on a correction. It does not happen to me. When people see that I am in love with the dog and how the dog responds, 100% of the time they say, “Man, nice dog,” or “Wow, very well-behaved.” Or they say nothing because they are judging me but are secretly jealous because their dog is an a-hole, and they can do nothing about it because they “don’t believe in corrections.”

Negative Markers

Bridge words between behavior and consequence that allow us to gradually fade out corrections.

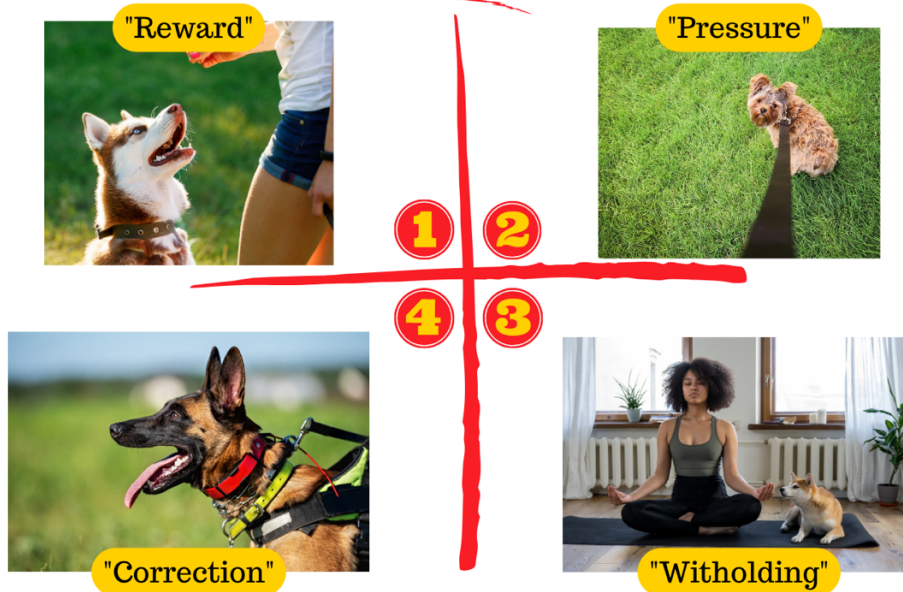
- No – Correction is imminent.
- Off – Get off of me, the couch, the bed, my guests, the counter
- Out – Spit out a toy, get out of a room
- Easy – Slow down, Calm down

Training Map: The Operant Conditions

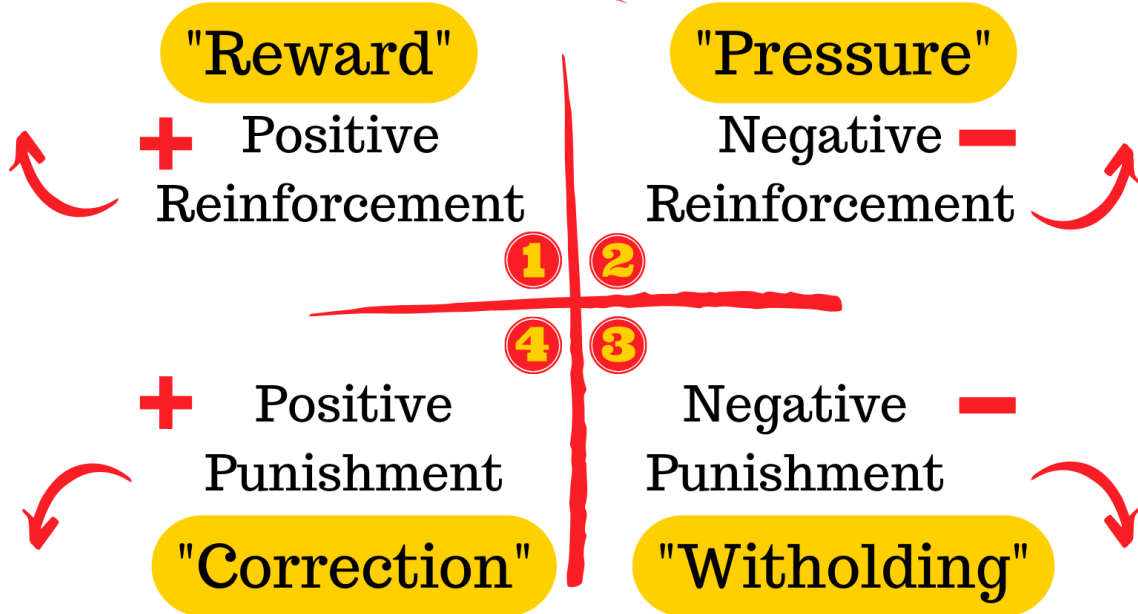
My goal is always to train the dog in front of me, but every dog learns all of the four operant conditions: Prevention, Payment, Pressure, Proofing. If you aren't using all of these conditions, you're failing your dog and your family, you're going to waste time and allow rehearsal of the problem behaviors you're attempting to end. If you use them all properly, you'll see how things start to click for you and the dog, and your relationship and their behavior will

1. Prevention of Rehearsal: Building Structure, Protocols, Boundaries (Negative Punishment)
2. Payment for Shaping: Free Shaping, Assisted Shaping, Word Association (Positive Reinforcement)
3. Pressure for Conditioning: Intro to Spatial, Social, and Static Pressure (Negative Reinforcement)
4. Proofing with Corrections: Leash, Ecollar, Stopping the Game (Positive Punishment)

THE OPERANT CONDITIONS



THE OPERANT CONDITIONS



Training Through Play!

Homework Sounds Bad, but that's what this is.

[The Yoyo Game: Charging Your Markers 1 Meal/day](#)

Using our three positive markers, you're going to send the dog away from you, using "Break;" inviting the dog into your space by saying "Yes" and stepping backward; then mark with a "Good" and pay the dog for just gravitating around you. Very quickly they'll offer a sit because of the angle that you're standing in front of them, and in a couple days, a down. This process is called Free Shaping, but before you can shape, we're just teaching the dog the marker system because they need clarity to know where they are going to get paid. There's a video attached to the blue lettering in each section. Check it out, and let me know if you have any questions. In fact, send me a video or two!

[The Difference Between Good, Yes, and Break](#)

For example, you want the dog to understand that when you say "Good" to mark their Place behavior, that you are coming to the dog to pay them at progressively further distances for implied stay. Conversely, if you're far from your dog and want to bring them into your space, the "Yes" is a reflexive marker that causes a nice little explosion toward you. And break is a release away to you for a specific reward, which can be a treat or kibble, and even a tug toy!

[Building Trust & Drive Channeling](#)

Obviously, in the sport dog world, speed is the goal. With Pet dogs, what serves you best is to have the dog in the arousal level that will best suit the training need. For example, we wouldn't do a high-energy fetch & tug game right before practicing doorway control. At the threshold, we want the dog nice and calm.

The days of Alpha style dominance training are coming to an end (finally). Today, we have learned that dogs do know who and what we are – and we are not wolves. There's a dog trainer up North who says that dogs are wolves and we are too...literally on the front page of his site. We stand upright, we speak a different language, we have opposable thumbs, but most of all, for whatever reason, it seems that we were made to take care of and train dogs. For whatever reason, the universe or God put us in the same story, and it seems that we're here to stay!

But if you think you're going to be able to leverage emotion as a primary negative motivator, you're going to fail. I want you to breathe and realize that this is a creature that needs to believe you. They'll know if you're lying, and they need you all in. This is where the Language of Play training comes in. It's just a game of Fetch and Tug, but it's more than that. It's a message to your dog: you are strong, and I am not afraid; you are fast and smart, and I understand you need to channel that aggression to relieve stress. Here's how it works...

[The Language of Play: Fetch & Tug 5-10 mins/day](#)

Using our three positive markers, you're going to throw the tug away from you, using Break; waiting for the dog to pick it up with their mouth, then inviting the dog into your space by saying Yes and stepping backward; once they are with you, touch the dog to pay them, marking with a Good and make that tug comes alive with some light tugs.

You'll start softly and will be able to progress by picking the dog up with the tug because our goal is to build Curiosity, Frustration, Possession, Compression, and eventually a nice Release word. I play tug until the dog is ready for a break, let the dog strip the tug right out of my hand 4-5 times, and then celebrate when they take possession themselves, moving away from the dog so they realize the game stops when the tug is not in your hand, so what do they do? They move toward you, you mark them with a Yes again, and rinse and repeat. This is a great exercise to do following the structured walk.

At the end of your play session, you will relax the tug, holding it in both hands, slowly moving your hands together and shrinking the space that the dog can put their mouth. And with no tension or pressure, you will firmly give the Out marker, which stands in contrast to all of our positive markers in tone and novelty. The dog will hear the contrast and either spit out the tug or give some last second nervous gnaws on the tug, and then eventually spit it out. Be patient!

Once they have released the tug, you can slowly move it away. If you strip it away from them, you are going to develop a bad habit of putting the tug back into play inadvertently by making it alive again. Once it's out of play, you can use Free as a release word to let the dog chill for a second, then put away the toy out of reach, and crate the dog for a bit. Louie even crated himself after 7-8 mins of proper tug!

Structured Walking: Building the Relationship

Walking your dog is a special time that you should devote about 15 mins to twice a day. A lot of you just laughed because you let your dog *drag* you for 1 mile a few times a day and think that's the point. This exercise is not about physically wearing out the dog. A tired dog is not necessarily a good dog. A dog exhausted through the mental work of training will be a *great* dog.

The following exercise is not to make up the whole walk forever. I use it as a warmup each time that I enter a new distraction setting. We often try to leap from working in the living room to going straight to a public park. This is going to set you and the dog up for failure. You're not ready for that yet. Start in the Living Room, then progress to the back yard, the front yard, your front walkway, the driveway, the sidewalk, your block, then the neighborhood, then finally, a public park.

I'm not a fan of dog parks or doggy daycare, so avoid that at all costs because it involves too many unknown elements that will undoubtedly shape your dog's behavior. That said, if your dog is leash reactive, eventually your top tier of distractions in exposure will be walking on a loose leash outside of a dog park. Don't make that jump too soon. You want to build little wins, stair stepping toward more predictability in more challenging environments.

A Right, Proper Leash Grip

If you're putting your hand through the leash loop, just holding it in your hand, or wrapping it around your hand multiple times, please stop this immediately. I have a better leash grip for you that is really going to serve you in all phases of structured walking, until you get some predictability, at which point it won't matter if you hold the leash with your pinky.

Close your hand into a fist and then observe how your fingers close with the thumb at the top. Imagine the leash going up through the bottom of your 4 fingers, around your thumb, and then back through the fingers, laying on itself. There should be no space between the leash and the top of your thumb, and you can hold the leash anywhere using this leash grip, long or short. The key in the structured walk is that no matter the length of the leash, it should be slack, loose, in a relaxed J position instead of tight or tense.

Once you have your leash grip locked in as the pictures below demonstrate, relax your arms, square your shoulders to the horizon, take a deep breath, and move forward through the phases. There is no popping in the 4 phases until Phase 3, and I only pop backward to slow down or upward if the dog does not autosit. All the corrections in these phases are found naturally in phases 1-2 and are created by the handler in phases 3-4. I have several videos of this on both YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook for reference as well. (Photos below)



The 4 Phases of Structured Walking:

Phase 1: Attraction – Long Leash, Turning Away

Phase 2: Anticipation – Short Leash, Turning Away

Phase 3: Automation – Short Leash, Turning Inside

Phase 4: Attention – Long Leash, Turning Inside

One Day at a Time

Every day, I try to get just a little bit better, a little bit clearer, a little more tuned into the dog and the handler's needs and goals. I suggest that each day you start fresh, wipe the slate clean, and take the next right step with your dog, even if it's trying to take yesterday's step again. The beauty of dog training is that they are immensely forgiving, maybe even to a fault. There are horrible trainers (in my eyes) who get pretty good results for their clients. I love all dog trainers because I know the B.S. that we put up with from every side, but we can all be better, myself included.

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Nick White – SitStayLearn
The Monks of New Skete

Bart Belon – NePoPo

There are literally thousands of dog trainers who you could learn everything from. There are also 1000 ways to teach the same thing. You can learn something from every single trainer you've ever encountered. Be open to what works, what makes the dog look and perform better, and what saves you time and frustration.