Anyone Can Train Their Dog

By Art Hess

Daily Walks And The Excited Dog

The daily dog walk is not only your best training and exercise opportunity, it is also the highlight of your dog's day. The problem is many dogs get so overly excited with the prospect of going for the walk that they become impossible monsters. With the jumping and crazy activity plus the fight just to get the leash on, they continue this foolishness by pulling the owner down the street and ducking into and behind every tree, gate, or whatever they encounter until the owner says "to heck with this stuff" and the dog walks become history.

Luckily it doesn't have to be that way, so let's change things. Before we start the process just pick up the leash, walk to the door and if the dog starts to act up in any way you walk back to the kitchen counter and leave the leash. In a few minutes you start again and until he sits at the door and accepts having the leash put on while he remains quiet you simply quit and let him settle. No talk, no hands, no direction. JUST STAND THERE. Trust me he will eventually figure things out and when he does sit quietly you say good dog, put on the leash and proceed to the door. When you get to the door he is directed to SIT and WAIT while you open the door. If he moves, you repeat the sit and wait process.

When he finally waits until he's asked to proceed you go through the door and take a few steps and ask him, no direct him (in a calm but assertive voice) to sit. No matter if he jumps, charges, barks, yelps, or whatever he is expected to sit. When he cools down and "lets the air out of his tires" you reward him with a small treat and calmly turn around and go back into the house, walk to his bed, ask him to sit and remove the leash.

Repeat this exercise every half hour until he will accept the leash, quietly walk to door and sit and wait until he's invited to proceed out the door and will sit readily on command as soon as he's outside. If you make a concentrated effort you can teach this procedure in one or two training sessions with concentrated effort.

Now we're ready for the real walk. Equip yourself with a pocket of treats (pieces of kibble will do the job) and with the dog on your left side on a loose leash with at least six inches of slack you take a couple of steps and say "let's go." As long as the dog walks along at a normal pace with his head and shoulders beside your left knee you praise him and keep walking.
Just in case he's one of those that charges off and decides he's leading the parade on a tight leash here's all you do. STOP, STAND STILL. When he figures out you're not going anywhere he'll eventually sit whereupon you'll give him one of those treats you've got stashed in your pocket. Now start again and try for three or four steps before he gets out of position. But persist. As soon as he leaves the magic zone you STOP. This time he will sit sooner. As you proceed with the stop, sit, treat process, you'll find that his walking in the correct position becomes longer and when he gets out of shape and you stop he will be sitting much quicker.

It's not uncommon to have a dog figure this out in a single lesson to where he'll walk beside and sit automatically when you stop. Good Luck
LOOSE LEASHES, HAPPY TAILS.