

Dog Walker Tips

- Sometimes I feel in an anxious rush because of the great numbers of dogs waiting hopefully for me. But slowing down can make a big difference for both you and the dog. If a dog seems very pushy or overexcited in the kennel, go into the kennel with him, shut the gate, and spend a moment making contact and settling him before trying to leash up and exit. There are some dogs who just get more pent up & wild with this strategy, but for others, it reassures, and teaches them that calm behavior results in getting what they want.
- Some dogs are uneasy going through doorways, or going back into their kennel. You can take some of the pressure off them, and make the doorways less of an issue by trying the following. As much as possible depending on the situation, give the dog a good deal of loose leash as you near the door. Open the door or kennel gate, and stand to the side, as if you really don't care about going through the doorway at all. Let the dog sniff around a bit and size things up. With the pressure off, she is often curious enough to wander in. Or you can then guide her in gently with leash.
- Passing through the kennel alleyways is stressful for most dogs, and can cause the sweetest pooch to feel confrontational. Reduce stress by planning the shortest route out. Usually exiting from the outside portion of the kennel means passing by fewer barking dogs.
- It is amazing what a good food treat can accomplish. Food-motivated dogs can be led past challenging obstacles "by their noses"! Try to keep a few extra-smelly, tasty treats for this purpose. This can prevent the build-up of tension caused when you depend on controlling them with a tight leash and charging through the hallway. For other pooches, a favorite toy can work the same way. Take along the toy they have favored while in the play-yard, and make the "return trip" part of the fun.
- Some dogs try to squeeze back out the gate when you return them to their kennel. Keep a pocketful of good kibble, and toss a small handful into the back of their kennel before you exit. For many dogs this is a great distraction, and makes "going home" something to look forward to.
- Your dog may be craving interaction with other dogs, and may get overexcited when passing other dogs in the halls or neighborhood. Since we don't know each dog's social skills, close interactions should be avoided. Instead of pulling away and saying "No", try re-directing your dog's energies by asking for an alternative behavior like sitting for a treat. It is easier to "not do" the problem behavior if they have something specific to think about instead.