

# Episode: #73

## Why Your Dog is Still Pulling on Leash and How to Fix it

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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SG Imagine if you came to me and said, "Hey Susan, could you teach me how to juggle?" And I said, "Sure, grab a bike." "A bike?" "Yeah. A bike." And while you were pedaling, I said, "Just take these three balls and throw them up in the air and then catch them." How successful do you think you'd be? Uh, probably not very successful. Right. And what if walking down the street with somebody you've always looked up to and somebody you've always wanted to meet, like, I don't know, Beyoncé or Brené Brown or LeBron James, or somebody like that.

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How do you think it would go for you? And what if I snapped at you? "Hey, knock it off! Pay attention! Watch me!" or something like that. Do you think that would help? But that's the equivalent of what many dogs are facing every day as they try to learn how to walk on leash with their owners. Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog.

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If you're watching this on YouTube and you would like to see your dog walking better on leash, go ahead and hit the like button now. If you're not watching this on YouTube and you're listening in your car, you're going to want to come over to YouTube. Because I was actually juggling just there. Today, I'm going to share with you the number one mistake that people make when they're trying to teach their dogs to walk on a loose leash. And that is, they overwhelm the dog.

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My mentor, Bob Bailey calls it 'lumping'. You know, you can either be a splitter or somebody who splits behavior into small pieces to teach a dog or a lumper. And when you're a lumper, I can promise you, your dog is unlikely to have success. So how do people lump walking on a loose leash? Well, they do things like they expect a dog to not scratch at the collar. Now some people go, "Oh, no, no, no. My dog is used to a collar. Everything's cool with that." Well, then they say, "I need you to be in a certain spot."

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But that certain spot is pretty ambiguous. You know, where is that spot at your side? Is it behind you? "Well, no, I just don't want them to pull." Well, not pull leaves a lot of variables. So, you might want to get more specific with that criteria. But what people do is they get a brand-new puppy, they clip the leash on them, and then they take them out down the street.

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What do puppies love? They love new things. So, they see people and it's like, they're seeing a movie star. "Oh my gosh. I got to see that person." So, not only do they not have any understanding of how to be successful walking on leash, but they don't know what you want. You're throwing a world of distractions at them. There might be other dogs. There might be, of course, people. There might be cars. There might be birds and bunnies, and they're expected to know how to juggle? While riding a bicycle and seeing all these people, that to a dog or especially a puppy, we're all like movie stars because they all want to meet us. Well, most dogs anyway.



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So, what can we do to fix this? Recently, I put a [YouTube video up](#), which was all about perch work and pivots. That is a phenomenal place to start. Because what we're doing is, we're giving our dogs a target. You're going to just put this perch and I used, you know, in the video I said you could use something like a dog bowl. If it's got something that isn't slippery on one side, that the dog can put their feet on.

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So, you can use this as a target. I'm going to give a challenge to you guys right now. Seven days, if you've got seven days, I got 10 fingers up. If you're driving, you know, I'm saying seven, but 10 fingers— if you've got seven days— it's metric up here in Canada so it's got to be like 10, right?

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If you've got seven days, we are going to create a dog who walks better on leash. Seven days. Here's what I want you to do; is make a commitment and say it out loud if you're driving a car, "I'm committed to have my dog walk on leash better in seven days." All right. So, I want you to make a commitment.

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I'm going to spend three minutes in the morning. Sometime between when I get up and before I feed my dog their breakfast. I'm going to spend three minutes when I get home from work. And if you're working from home because of our pandemic here, then put an extra one in at lunchtime. And I'm going to do three minutes after dinner. And three minutes before I go to bed or sometime in the evening, if we're doing it with a puppy, we don't want them doing it when they're tired. Okay.

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So, first thing in the morning, when you get home from work, after dinner, and before bed. Four sessions. And if you're working from home, throw in a fifth. Three minutes that's all I'm asking from you. All right. And all that we're going to do is number one, you're just going to work on the perch work and pivots that I have on YouTube. We're going to get the dog understanding how to move from one side of your body to the other with that pivot.

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That's an excellent exercise. Let's say we're walking down the street, my dogs on the left, I see another dog coming towards us. I can just tell my dog if they've done their perch work side and they will pivot in front of me and come to my right side. And now that dog, I put my body between the dog and my dog. So, if my dog is crazy and loves and wants to meet all the other dogs, then the temptation gets lower because I've got her further away.

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If my dog is a little afraid of other dogs, or if you don't know that other dog and don't know what his like or dislike is for dogs, it's just safer right? So, perch work is brilliant to get your dog to change sides, but the most important thing guys, we are building a specific behavior. We're telling the dog, if you remember back in [episode number 53](#) where I talked about how I use reinforcement zone right at my seam. Right. I would get the dog seen on your seam. Reinforcement zone to watch my dog, walk my dog. This is helping your dog to learn what reinforcement zone is. That perch is a brilliant and what we call a foot target, a paw target.



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So, at first you might start with something that's a little taller and when the dog's got success, you're going to go to something that's a little smaller. And the dog can move from one side to the other. And then we might try something by throwing the cookies behind and will the dog come up? And it's a lot smaller.

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So, then we're starting to fade that big target and then you might go into something like just a Tupperware lid with a big piece of duct tape. And duct tape it on the ground and have your dog come in and they're going to stand on that. And I would ask them to sit, but you know, some of them, you can just, they could come in and stand and then you could give them food. And in the reinforcement zone, touch your seam, give the dog a cookie. Then we're going to fade it down to just a piece of duct tape on the floor.

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So, we've trained over and over and over and over what reinforcement zone is. I would do it with your dog on the right and on the left, because remember whoever we're walking down the street with, we might want to switch dogs one side to the other.

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All right. All of this is done stationary. Do you see what I've done? I've split the behavior of walking on leash down to just come and stand beside me. That's all. So, you might do a full week of this, right? So, our challenge is seven days. I would do at least five days of this, you know, maybe going into the sixth day you might take a step.

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So, our dog, we're down to a piece of tape. And now we're going to step ahead and there's going to be nothing there but your seam. And release your dog. Can they move one step into reinforcement zone without your help, without a target there? Boom. Now you're going to put them on a leash and do the same thing. And be sure when you're doing it, you might be practicing in your kitchen.

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If you're doing this four times a day, you might do the first two sessions in your kitchen and then maybe go into your bedroom for the last two. Mix it up. Eventually over the seven days you've used every room in the house and if it's nice out, go outside to where there's no distractions. So, if you've got bunnies and your neighbor calling you over the fence or other dogs barking, I want no distractions for the first few days.

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All right. By day six, we're taking one step. And just one step and feed, and then you're going to take two or three steps. By day seven we can be taking five steps around your backyard. And a week from now, you might be able to walk all around your backyard, your dog's going to stay right by your side. Now it's time you can go to the big time, go to the front yard, where there might be a car passing. Any time your dog goes out in front and says, "I remember how to pull on leash." You're going to say, "Wow. I've gone too far, too fast. There I am a lumping again." Now you're going to say, "Well, Susan, what am I going to do? How am I going to walk my dog on leash in the meantime?"



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Ideally, you're not. You're going to do things like play with your dog in the backyard. Take them to a fenced in area that's safe that you can just let them have a run or throw a toy from them. Or you're going to go to [episode number 32](#). You can exercise your dog without leaving your house for seven days. Absolutely you can.

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Ideally, you're taking them out in the backyard. I mean, they've got to go to the bathroom, right? So, you're taking them out somewhere where you can either put them in the car and take them somewhere safe. So ideally seven days, no walking on leash. Okay. If you've got a dog that goes cray-cray then this might not be a good challenge for you. But for the rest of you, I'd like you to try it.

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So again, what we're going to do is build value for your dog coming into reinforcement zone. That's on your out seam of your pants. We want our dog to be seen on your seam. Remember when you're training, if you go back to [episode number 59](#), you are using high value rewards for this. We want the dog to go, "Something crazy about me coming in on that seam. I don't know what it is, but she really likes that."

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So, you're going to the dog comes in, touch your seam and give them a cookie. And then you're going to go to a smaller target. And then you're going to take your show on the road. By day seven, you're going to be taking two or three steps around your backyard on a loose leash without your dog pulling. But it all begins with that video that I shared on my YouTube channel about how to teach perch work and pivots.

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Listen, our dogs are always doing the best they can with the education we give them in the environment that we're asking. And try to get a dog to walk on a leash when you haven't put in these layers, this is a great example of a dog screaming to you, "This is the best I got for you because you were a lumper. You didn't split this walking on leash business down to the smallest components like Susan talked about."

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And when you get to the front yard, you might call a neighbor and say, "Can you just walk out in front of your house and then walk back in." Eventually you might be able to walk by people and add one more distraction after another. If you are strategic about this, it won't take very long before you can do your entire loop of what you used to walk, but you'll be walking with a different dog. How cool is that?

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Be a splitter, not a lumper. I'll see you next time back here on Shaped by Dog.





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### Resources:

[YouTube Video: Susan Garrett's Perch Work Dog Tricks \(Pivots and Spins\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 53: Stop Your Dog Pulling on Leash and Start Walking Together](#)

[Podcast Episode 32: 20 Easy Ways to Exercise Your Dog at Home](#)

[Podcast Episode 59: Why Your Treats Aren't Working for Your Dog](#)

[Vlog Post: How do I Stop My Dog from Pulling on the Leash?](#)



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### About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with every dog she has ever owned over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago. Susan has helped hundreds of thousands of people enjoy a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.



A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.

Susan is now helping many thousands of dog owners in 82 countries have the best relationship possible with their dogs. The real joy for her comes from bringing confidence to dogs and their owner through playful interactions and relationship building games that are grounded firmly in the science of how animals learn.



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