

4. Leash Breaking

By the time you finish training, you will probably have already decided how to deal with your dog's hygiene requirements at home. However, through some unforeseen change of circumstances, it may become necessary for you to teach your dog to relieve him/herself on a patch of grass while still on the lead. This is known as leash breaking. It is advisable to contact GDTx and request an instructor to assist in this process.

However, the following notes are included for reference, offering guidelines should an immediate need arise. Leash breaking is often quite a time-consuming task and requires both patience and determination on your part. The points listed below will help ensure that the dog overcomes his/her inhibitions quickly and begins to respond to your training as soon as possible:

1. Introduce this exercise at a time when you are sure your dog needs to relieve him/herself – for example, shortly after eating or first thing in the morning.
2. Find a suitable patch of grass and extend the lead to its longest setting.
3. Using a quiet, reassuring voice, give the command, "Go busy", and repeat this periodically.
4. Move slowly around the area in circles, holding the lead fairly high and at arm's length so as to prevent it dragging and becoming entangled.
5. Allow your dog to sniff around and pick a spot. Try to avoid tension on or jerks through the lead, as the dog may interpret these as corrections for sniffing and become confused.
6. If you do this for five minutes and nothing has happened, leave it for half an hour and return.
7. When your dog does respond, give plenty of praise.

Teaching leash relief to a dog can be most frustrating. It is very tempting to give up and allow the dog to free-run in the yard. This totally defeats the object of the exercise. On the other hand, leash relief training done well and with success is very satisfying and of great benefit to many Guide Dog owners.