



When Dogs Talk™

Indoor and Outdoor Drag Lines

By Sarah Hodgson



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Indoor and Outdoor Drag Lines

Despite their name, drag lines are anything but a drag. Think of them as stress prevention tools for both you and your dog. When she's wearing one, you can easily interrupt problem behaviors calmly and quickly. Use the drag line to resolve jumping and chasing problems or soothe an over-excited or frightened dog. It's 6 to 50 feet of pure magic!

Tip: Your dog wants you to touch her. When she jumps on you and you push her off, you're touching. In her furry little head, that's a good thing. And good things get repeated! When you use the drag line to discourage jumping, it's strictly hands-off. She will stop associating jumping with touching and the behavior will diminish.

Good news, bad news: your dog wants to be like you. She wants to see what's on the counter, sit on the couch and interact with guests on a face-to-muzzle basis. It's this desire to mimic her other pack members that gets most dogs into trouble...and most people do just what *doesn't* work to resolve the problem: they yell, grab and chase. The cycle continues until the frustrated family calls me, exasperated.



Using The Indoor Drag Line

Lightweight and flexible, the 6-foot indoor drag line attaches to your dog's buckle collar or gentle leader. It is designed to be worn continuously (under supervision) while she's indoors. When your dog jumps up or gives chase, grab the drag line, not your dog. This "hands off" approach reinforces good behavior without inadvertently rewarding it or causing anxiety.

Use your indoor drag line to interfere with these common misbehaviors:

Jumping On The Counter

Meal preparation time is a great opportunity for your dog to practice her jumping skills, and that makes it a great opportunity to practice your "Off" direction.

As your dog begins her ascent, calmly grab the line and tug firmly, directing "Off!" in an authoritative voice. Continue what you were doing, ignoring your dog. Repeat as necessary.



Tip: Until your dog is reliably four-paws-on-the-floor, do not offer treats, trimmings or tastes from the counter. When you do offer to share, be sure your dog sits (the canine equivalent of "please") before rewarding.



Climbing On The Furniture

Oh, how hard it is to resist the comfy, cushy couch. Unless, of course, you've got your very own play station complete with toys and special goodies.

Tip: Set up stations in each room in which your dog spends time. Keep some chews or a favorite toy in that spot. Your dog will learn that these spots are the place to go to relax and find her toys. Learn more at WhenDogsTalk.com.

When the first paw is placed on the couch, swiftly tug the drag line and direct "Off." Bring your dog to her play station and praise her. If your dog is already lounging or perched on a cushion, calmly approach and tug the line firmly as you say "off." Remember: stay cool. Fast movements or a raised voice are seen as competitive or playful, not instructional.

Giving Chase

If your dog chases children or other animals, the drag line can help.

The moment you notice that look in your dog's eyes—that slightly excited "this is gonna be fun" look—tug the line and say "No." Be alert to situations that may stimulate your dog—kids, cats, whatever sets her off—and interrupt the thought process before it turns into a full-out chase.

Tip: Learn the most effective way to teach the "No" by visiting WhenDogsTalk.com.

If your dog has already started to chase, take the line calmly and lead her away from the scene. Do not offer a correction or command in the midst of a chase—she'll be too excited to understand.

Exciting or Scary Events

Doorbells, vacuum cleaners, fireworks...loud sounds can cause excitability or fear.

Step on your drag line when your dog is over-stimulated or scared. Do not move quickly or chase a fearful or hyper dog; doing so will only increase the already-elevated emotional climate. Simply stand quietly and show your dog a good example!



Tip: The drag line lets you manage a fearful or over-excited dog without frightening her. Sudden, startling moves—scooping up a small dog or grabbing a larger dog around the neck—can cause a defensive reaction. You dog may start to run away from you rather than look to you during stressful situations.



Using The Outdoor Drag Line

Your dog loves to explore and play. A standard 6-foot leash is perfect for in-town walks and training activities, but there are times when it's just too restrictive and your dog may long to break away.

Tip: Never let your dog run free in an unfenced area, but do give her limited freedom as often as possible. The long line is perfect for this.

Attach the outdoor drag line to your dog's buckle collar. Let her drag the line behind her as she explores the area. Don't hover—give your dog a little space. Keep your eyes on the end of the line to maintain control while creating the illusion of freedom.



If your dog wanders too close to a forbidden zone like the driveway or garden, pick up the line and shout “Back to Me!” as you run towards the safe-to-play zone.



Teaching “Come”

Encourage the “Come” command with the outdoor drag line. While your dog is sniffing around the yard, begin playing with one of her favorite toys, pretend you’ve found something fascinating in the grass or shake a cup of treats. Make enough noise and commotion to attract your dog’s attention. When she heads in your direction, say “Come!” with enthusiasm. Welcome her with open arms. Within a week, your dog will associate “Come!” with all kinds of positive feelings and race to your side when you say it!

Tip: To learn more about the best way to teach the “Come” and other fun games you can play to reinforce it by visiting WhenDogsTalk.com.

Other Uses For The Outdoor Drag Line

Discourage Jumping

Dogs jump on people to get better acquainted but jumping is socially awkward and you want to discourage it.

With their permission, of course, allow your dog to approach a person. If your dog starts to jump, tug her down firmly, saying “Off” If necessary, step on the line at a point that allows your dog to stand naturally but does not allow her to jump. Praise her when she settles down.



Prevent Digging or Stool Swallowing

Digging is annoying. Stool swallowing is...well. Let's not go there. Let's just figure out how to stop it.

Digging and stool swallowing are just your dog's way of exploring the world. Discourage these behaviors with the outdoor drag line. Watch your dog for signs of these behaviors and when she sets up for action, pick up the line and refocus her attention on another activity.

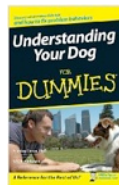
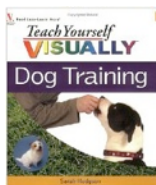
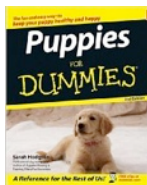
Tip: Centuries of breeding have created a small group of die-hard diggers. If possible, create a small area in your yard where these guys can indulge in their favorite pastime.

Curb Barking and Chasing

The generous length of the outdoor drag line gives you great distance control.

Be alert for triggers: squirrels, cars, bicycles...whatever whips your dog into a frenzy. The moment you see your dog alert to a stimulus, grab the line from as far away as possible, shout "No!" and run away from the distraction. Refocus your dog's attention with praise, a game or a toy.

For more information on housetraining, basic manners, problem solving and all-around dog behavior improvement, visit the WhenDogsTalk.com bookstore.



Thank you for your interest in the When Dogs Talk™ product line. Each item is designed to improve your relationship with your dog or puppy. For more creative and fun dog training tips, information and ideas, please visit WhenDogsTalk.com