



# Whole Dog Journal™

## The Best Dog Harnesses of 2018

**A front-clip harness can help you manage a strong-pulling dog while you work to improve his on-leash behavior. We've reviewed and rated a dozen products for safety, comfort, and effectiveness.**

By Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA

*[Updated July 19, 2018]*

For dogs who pull on leash, I have long preferred harnesses over [choke chains \(/issues/1\\_10/features/5280-1.html\)](/issues/1_10/features/5280-1.html), prong collars, [shock collars \(/issues/19\\_9/features/Why-We-Dont-Recommend-Shock-Collars\\_21518-1.html\)](/issues/19_9/features/Why-We-Dont-Recommend-Shock-Collars_21518-1.html), and even flat collars and [head halters \(/issues/3\\_6/features/5107-1.html\)](/issues/3_6/features/5107-1.html). Using a harness for dogs instead of a collar has huge benefits. There are many types of dog harnesses out there, and finding the best adult dog or puppy harness might seem like a daunting task. This *Whole Dog Journal* review of harnesses does all of the trial and error work of finding a quality harness for you!

When the first dedicated front-clip no-pull harness for dogs (the SENSE-ation Harness) arrived on the market over a decade ago, I was an instant fan of a leash-attachment ring on the harness strap that goes across the front of the dog's chest. With a properly fitted harness and gentle pressure on the leash (clipped to a ring on the dog's chest), even a physically challenged handler could turn a pulling dog's front end back toward her – and reinforce the dog for slacking the leash in this way – helping the dog learn not to pull.

Many other force-free trainers also embraced the new design as a huge improvement over head halters, which were clearly aversive to many dogs. In contrast, most dogs seem to accept the front-clip harness instantly, with only a very small population who seem to find the harness aversive. In my experience, most dogs who object to the harness are sensitive to touch and/or handling, and it's the process of putting the harness on, rather than wearing the harness, that they object to.

In the years since the SENSE-ation Harness made its debut, an overwhelming number of additional front-clip harnesses have been introduced and an ever-increasing number of people now use these products.

Some owners of dogs who tend to pull on-leash use these harnesses to prevent potential harm from excessive pressure on their dogs' tracheas. Many others seek out these harnesses primarily for use as management tools that lend a mechanical advantage, allowing a small or physically challenged person to safely walk a hard-pulling dog.

*[Editor's Note: The July 2018 issue of *Whole Dog Journal* includes a [new review of a hands-free leash system \(/issues/21\\_8/features/The-Trail-Runner-System\\_21883-1.html\)](/issues/21_8/features/The-Trail-Runner-System_21883-1.html) that works quite well. For a serious yanker, this product may be an excellent supplement to the no-pull harness while you work on training your dog not to pull.]*

As a dog trainer, I'd strongly prefer for owners to learn how to teach their dogs not to pull – but I'm also cognizant that unless an owner feels secure in her ability to control the dog, she will tend to avoid taking the dog out on walks for training. The various types of no-pull dog harnesses provide, in my experience, the least harmful way to give

many owners the window of opportunity to reinforce – and thereby train – polite leash walking.



The “Perfect Fit” harness lives up to its name. Each of the three component pieces that make up the harness can be purchased in a different size, ensuring comfort to dogs of any dimensions.

## Problems with Front-Clip Dog Harnesses

However, given their popularity, and a prevalent lack of attention to proper fit and adjustment, it’s now common to see dogs in obvious discomfort in poorly fit front-clip harnesses that interfere with their movement, even when they are walking without pulling. And some [veterinarians and veterinary physical therapists say they have seen an increase in dogs who have suffered injuries or chronic pain from these harnesses](/issues/16_7/features/the-no-pull-debate_20782-1.html) ([/issues/16\\_7/features/the-no-pull-debate\\_20782-1.html](/issues/16_7/features/the-no-pull-debate_20782-1.html)).

Fortunately, a number of front-clip harnesses have been developed specifically to address the concerns about the potential physical effects of undue pressure from a harness on a dog’s shoulders, possibly interfering with gait and physical development. With so many new products on the market, we figured it was about time for WDJ to review the broad range of front-clip harnesses currently available. We asked our own clients, fellow trainers, and their clients to recommend their favorite products, and selected the most-recommended dozen to review.

## Reviewing the Dog Harnesses

All the harnesses we reviewed work reasonably well to mitigate pulling by putting tension on the front of the dog’s chest; many also offer back-clip options. These products can be used with a leash that has clips at both ends; the handler can use pressure on the back attachment point to guide the dog when she’s not pulling, and control her pressure on the front attachment point if she begins to pull.

All of the harnesses slipped sideways to some degree when pressure was applied, but some slipped significantly more than others, increasing discomfort and chafing for the dog.

In addition, the front straps on some of the products sagged significantly; we found this to be particularly true of the models with straps that cross the dog’s chest horizontally. Reportedly, straps that sag (or are fitted too low) are a major source of injuries to dogs’ forelimb tendons, due to interference with the dog’s natural gait. Sagging chest

straps can be reduced to some degree by clipping the leash to the dog's collar as well as the front ring, but this remedy can reduce the effectiveness of the harness to mitigate the strength of the dog's pulling.


The harnesses with straps across the shoulders generally do a better job of reducing pulling, but we acknowledge that this advantage may not be enough to offset the concern for physical damage to the dog. At the end of each review, we provided dog harness pros and cons to help you find the best harness for your dog.

Please note: The dog harness reviews on this page are geared toward fully grown dogs. For tips on finding the best device for a puppy, see "[Best Puppy Collars & Harnesses \(/issues/19\\_1/features/Best-Puppy-Collars\\_21378-1.html\)](/issues/19_1/features/Best-Puppy-Collars_21378-1.html)".

# WDJ's Product Ratings

*The product has no redeeming value that we can appreciate.*

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 *We are including the product only because of its potential for improvement.*


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 *The product has some value, as well as some serious flaws. Some of its features may be useful in certain applications.*

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 *A good product, with one or two significant flaws.*




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 *As good as it gets. We strongly endorse the product.*

## Top-Rated Front-Clip Dog Harnesses

Rating	Product	Price	Sizes	Colors	Fit	Function
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	<p>BALANCE HARNESS</p> <p><u>Blue-9 Pet Products</u> (<a href="https://www.blue-9.com/">https://www.blue-9.com/</a>)</p> <p>Maquoketa, IA</p> <p>(563) 293-5999</p>	<p>\$38-\$40</p>	<p>Five, XS to L</p>	<p>Five color choices for back strap (the rest is black).</p>	<p>Easy to put on over the head – colored strap goes on the top.</p>	<p>Six adjustment points, no shoulder restriction. Works very well to reduce pulling, with almost no slippage or gapping.</p>
	<p>FRONT RANGE HARNESS</p> <p><u>Ruffwear</u> (<a href="http://www.ruffwear.com/">http://www.ruffwear.com/</a>)</p> <p>Bend, OR</p> <p>(888) 783-3932</p>	<p>\$40</p>	<p>Five, XXS to L/XL</p>	<p>Six color choices.</p>	<p>Four adjustment points, very easy to put on over the head.</p>	<p>This harness worked well to control pulling, and the attachment point moved only slightly off-center with use, moving promptly back to center when pulling ceased.</p>
	<p>PERFECT FIT MODULAR FLEECE HARNESS</p> <p><u>Clean Run Productions</u> (<a href="https://www.cleanrun.com/">https://www.cleanrun.com/</a>)</p> <p>South Hadley, MA</p> <p>(800) 311-6503</p>	<p>\$45-\$70</p>	<p>Straps come in three different widths, with four sizes in each width</p>	<p>Six color choices for the top piece (the rest is black).</p>	<p>The best fit potential of all products reviewed. Five adjustment points. Easy to put on over the head – colored strap goes on the top.</p>	<p>The front connection point sits lower than in some other brands, helping this harness function better to control pulling than several of the other brands. It also gaps less.</p>

## Top-Rated Dog Harnesses (4 PAWS)

Our top-rated harnesses all fit well, with minimal sagging, sideways slipping, or gapping of the front strap. These strengths are due to the fact that all three are designed with a Y-shaped chest piece rather than a horizontal strap across the shoulder (the kind that reportedly causes discomfort and injury). All three are easy to put on the dog and are effective in reducing pulling. Despite some marketing claims, none of them “fixed” pulling in “just minutes” – all harnesses require some training in the process in order to truly teach a dog to walk politely on the leash.

Our three top-rated harnesses are presented in alphabetical order:

### Balance Harness



Balance Harness

We like this well-designed, well-made harness a lot. Made by Blue-9 Pet Products, it offers two nice, large rings as attachment points, one in the front and one on the back, and adjusts in six places – more than any of the other products we reviewed. Every single strap that connects one piece of hardware to another adjusts individually: the left and right sides of the neck, the left and right sides of the chest, as well as the straps that connect the “collar” of the harness to the “girth” (one on the back of the dog’s neck and one that goes between his front legs); this enables an owner to get the fit just right.



Balance Harness

To put it on the dog, you put the “collar” section over the dog’s head, pass the lower straps through the dog’s front legs, and snap them on both sides to the top strap (which is easy to identify and position, given its contrasting color). It’s super easy.

**PROS:** Good-quality materials, simple design. Very minimal sideways shifting of chest ring when leash pressure is applied. Girth strap can be adjusted far enough back to be well clear of armpits to avoid chafing.

**CONS:** Seriously, we were hard-pressed to find anything to criticize one this harness; none.

## **Front Range Harness**





Front Range Harness

Like all of Ruffwear's products, their Front Range Harness is very attractive and well made, with heavy-duty hardware and double stitching throughout. It offers two leash-attachment points (front and back) and adjusts in four locations. It's very easy to put on; just slip the collar section over the dog's head, draw the straps between his front legs, and click the two long straps into the plastic buckles on either side. The XXS size option makes this the best harness for small dogs we reviewed.

The nylon straps are actually a bit thin, but because so much of the harness is well padded, this should not present a chafing issue. This was the best padded dog harness we reviewed.

We love the two places where a dog's identifying information can be located: there is a pocket for the dog's ID tag, and a write-on spot on the inside of the chest piece.

**PROS:** No straps across the shoulders. Straps adjust easily. Nicely padded for uber-comfort, including padded tabs that insulate the dog's skin from the plastic buckles to reduce chafing.

**CONS:** The front ring is small, and looks like a possible weak point; it looks vulnerable to failing due to pressure from a strong-pulling dog.





Front Range Harness

### **Perfect Fit Modular Fleece Harness**

This harness is the most expensive one we reviewed, but it also may be the best harness for dogs we found – best made, best fitting, and most comfortable.



The Perfect Fit is constructed from three pieces that are chosen individually, based on your dog's unique measurements. The top, front, and girth pieces clip together to make a complete harness with two connection points, front and back, and five places where the straps can be adjusted. The Perfect Fit harness is perfect for tripod dogs (those who are missing a front limb) because of its modular design.

The harness straps are available in three different widths, from 15 millimeters (a smidge more than half an inch) to 40 millimeters (a little more than 1 1/2 inches) wide. The bigger the dog you are fitting, the wider the straps you will select. All three pieces that you select for your dog's harness must be the same width. The top piece is easy to differentiate from the chest piece, as the top is always the colored one. (The black top piece has reflective stitching, so it can't be confused with a black front piece.)

The Perfect Fit is easy to put on the dog. Just slide the collar section over his head, draw the straps between his front legs, and clip the plastic buckles on each side of his body to the top piece. The harness adjusts easily; the fifth adjustment location, on the strap that connects the "collar" of the harness to the "girth," helps ensure that the girth can be positioned well behind to elbow to prevent chafing in the armpit.







Perfect Fit Harness







**PROS:** Almost the entire harness is lined with soft fleece – not likely to chafe! The modular system allows for custom fitting for dogs of any size.


**CONS:** Fleece may collect dirt and/or burrs, and may wear easily. At the high end of harness price range.

## The Other Front-Clip Dog Harnesses Tested

Rating	Product	Price	Sizes	Colors	Fit	Function
	<p>FREEDOM HARNESS</p> <p><u>Freedom No Pull Harness</u> (<a href="http://www.freedomnopullharness.com/">http://www.freedomnopullharness.com/</a>)</p> <p>Tuxedo Park, NY (248) 321-5538</p>	\$30	Six, from XS to 2X	18 choices	Four adjustment points. Easy to put on over the head – colored strap goes on the top.	Works well to control pulling, with mild sagging and gapping.
	<p>WALK IN SYNC</p> <p><u>Walk in Sync, Inc.</u> (<a href="https://www.dogwalkinsync.com/">https://www.dogwalkinsync.com/</a>)</p> <p>Basalt, CO (970) 948-5418</p>	\$60, includes harness and leash	Six, from XS to L	Four choices	Five adjustment points. No straps across shoulders. Sits farther behind armpits, so less chance of rubbing.	Works well to control pulling. Very little slipping, no gapping. Leash is made with two padded grips that remind handler to keep her hands in a position that promotes loose-leash walking.



	<p>SENSE-ATION HARNESS</p> <p><u>Softouch Concepts</u> (<a href="http://www.softouchconcepts.com/">http://www.softouchconcepts.com/</a>)</p> <p>Union City, CA</p> <p>(866) 305-6145</p>	<p>\$25-\$31</p>	<p>Nine, from Mini to XLarge</p>	<p>Six color choices for the top and front pieces (the rest is black)</p>	<p>Four adjustment points. Easy to put on over the head - colored straps go on the top and in front.</p>	<p>Works well to control pulling, but with moderate sagging and gapping.</p>
	<p>SURE-FIT HARNESS</p> <p><u>PetSafe (Radio Systems)</u> (<a href="http://www.petsafe.net/">http://www.petsafe.net/</a>)</p> <p>Knoxville, TN</p> <p>(866) 738-4379</p>	<p>\$16-\$21</p>	<p>Four, from XS to L</p>	<p>Five color choices</p>	<p>Five adjustment points.</p>	<p>Works reasonably well to control pulling. No sagging and less gapping than several other brands. Can be confusing to put on.</p>
	<p>TTOUCH HARMONY HARNESS</p> <p><u>Tellington TTouch Training</u> (<a href="http://www.ttouch.com/">http://www.ttouch.com/</a>)</p> <p>Santa Fe, NM</p> <p>(866) 488-6824</p>	<p>\$24</p>	<p>Six, from XXS to XL</p>	<p>Five color choices</p>	<p>Five adjustment points. Single color makes it harder to determine top/bottom. Easy to slip over head or snap around neck.</p>	<p>This harness worked reasonably well to control pulling. The attachment point moved off-center easily with use, moved back to center when pulling ceased.</p>
	<p>WONDER WALKER BODY HALTER</p> <p><u>Dolan's Dog Doodads</u> (<a href="http://www.wonderwalkerbodyhalter.com/">http://www.wonderwalkerbodyhalter.com/</a>)</p> <p>Seattle, WA</p> <p>(206) 257-4518</p>	<p>\$26</p>	<p>Seven, from Tiny to Extra Large</p>	<p>Nineteen color choices for the top piece (the rest is black)</p>	<p>Five adjustment points. Easy to put on over the head - colored strap goes on the top.</p>	<p>Rides higher than some across-the-shoulder brands but still creates some shoulder pressure. Works reasonably well to control pulling, but leash-pressure causes significant gapping in the front, and lack of pressure causes sagging.</p>
	<p>DT UNIVERSAL NO-PULL PLUS HARNESS</p> <p><u>Dean &amp; Tyler</u> (<a href="http://www.dtdogcollars.com/">http://www.dtdogcollars.com/</a>)</p> <p>San Antonio, TX</p> <p>(800) 826-1840</p>	<p>\$38-\$45</p>	<p>Four, from XS to XL</p>	<p>Black only</p>	<p>Only two adjustment points. Very bulky.</p>	<p>Works reasonably well to control pulling. Straps bunch under pressure.</p>
	<p>EASY WALK HARNESS</p> <p><u>PetSafe (Radio Systems)</u> (<a href="http://www.petsafe.net/">http://www.petsafe.net/</a>)</p> <p>Knoxville, TN</p> <p>(866) 738-4379</p>	<p>\$27</p>	<p>Eight</p>	<p>Seven choices</p>	<p>Four adjustment points. One leash attachment.</p>	<p>Works reasonably well to control pulling. Worst sagging we experienced.</p>

	<p>WALK YOUR DOG WITH LOVE HARNESS</p> <p><u>Walk Your Dog with Love</u> (<a href="http://www.walkyourdogwithlove.com/">http://www.walkyourdogwithlove.com/</a>)</p> <p>Lanesboro, MA</p> <p>(413) 496-3005</p>	<p>\$30</p>	<p>Seven</p>	<p>Eight choices</p>	<p>Three adjustment points. One leash attachment.</p>	<p>Works reasonably well to control pulling. Significant sagging and gapping.</p>
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Freedom Harness

### 3-PAW Products

The harnesses that we rated with three paws also fit and functioned well, but either the quality of the materials used in these products was not as high or there were some challenges with straps twisting, making it more difficult to put the harnesses on.

#### Freedom Harness

This is the highest-rated product with a strap that crosses the dog's chest and shoulders horizontally. The Freedom Harness has two points of attachment (front and back) and adjusts in four places. Full disclosure: I have been using this harness at my training center for quite some time; it is my favorite of the across-the-shoulder harnesses for fit and quality.

**PROS:** Made with soft nylon, cross-stitched everywhere, and sturdy hardware. Straps adjust easily. Straps that go under the dog's "armpits" are velveteen, to prevent chafing. Martingale loop at back leash attachment helps keep harness tight and reduces slipping and gapping.

**CONS:** Straps go across shoulders. Design allows straps to twist; it can be challenging to untwist.



## Walk In Sync Harness

This well-made harness has two leash attachment points and adjusts in five places for a secure fit.

**PROS:** We like the reflectors on the harness and leash, and the two padded grips on the leash are terrific!

**CONS:** All one color, along with significant tendency for twisting straps, can make it challenging to put on properly.



Walk In Sync Harness

## 2-PAW Products

The following harnesses use cheaper materials and/or have more significant design and/or function flaws.

### SENSE-ation Harness

Kudos to Softouch, the company that invented this, the original front-clip harness.

**PROS:** Simple design, quality materials. Girth strap is a softer (polyester) material for comfort. Straps adjust easily.

**CONS:** Strap across shoulders. Product literature claims it doesn't put pressure on the shoulders, but it seems to us that it does. Buckle tends to end up in armpit and rub.





SENSE-ation Harness

## **Sure-Fit Harness**

Although not marketed as a front-clip harness, the ring located at the chest of this harness can be used as one of two leash attachment points.

**PROS:** Made with quality materials.

**CONS:** The fact that this harness is made by a shock collar company (Radio Systems) prevents us from buying and using it. Also, straps twist easily, and solid color, multi-strap design can make it confusing to put on. Fits snugly under armpits and causes the skin to bunch up - could chafe.



Sure-Fit Harness

## **TTouch Harmony Harness**

There are five places to adjust this harness, and four leash attachment points: one in front and three on the back (two of the latter are sort of a mystery – what are they used for?).

**PROS:** Lightweight, not bulky. No shoulder strap. Double stitching.

**CONS:** Straps can easily twist when not on the dog, which can make putting the harness on difficult. Single stitching at non-connection points.





TTouch Harmony Harness

### **Wonder Walker Body Halter**

Two leash-attachment points and four adjustment points. Better quality material than some of the shoulder-pressure models, but with significant gapping and sagging.

**PROS:** Medium-weight, soft nylon straps, double-stitched, heavy duty hardware. Straps adjust easily.

**CONS:** Straps go across shoulders, although higher than some harness brands.





Wonder Walker Body Halter

## Lowest Rated Dog Harnesses (1-PAW)

The following harnesses may offer some utility for some dog owners, but didn't, in our opinion, possess enough positive features to outweigh factors that we considered a drawback.

### DT Universal No-Pull Plus

Dean and Tyler specialize in heavy-duty products for large working dogs, including service animals and those in law enforcement. Most of their products are big, strong, and bulky.

Woody, our model for this article, weighs 68 pounds and has a girth measurement of 27 inches. According to the sizing chart, he could wear either a size "small" (which would fit a dog with a 24- to 27 1/2-inch girth), or a "medium" (which would fit a dog with a 27 1/2- to 33-inch girth). Given that the product is so bulky, we first selected the size "small" for him, not wanting the larger size to have extra material flapping about and weighing him down. But the smaller size just barely fit; it was just way too snug in every way. We sent it back and got the medium, after all.



DT Universal No-Pull Plus

The "medium" size product fit better, but the overwhelming feeling we got from this harness was that it really is meant for giant dogs. The straps – and, necessarily, buckles – are very wide. In particular, the strap that goes between the dog's front legs, would pose a rubbing and chafing hazard. Woody was more or less immobilized by discomfort in this harness; a much larger dog with a thicker coat might wear it without any problem.

The harness has two leash attachment points (front and back), and attachment points on the side of the harness for use when the dog is meant to pull. Wait, what?



This is actually a multi-purpose harness; designed to be used for both pulling (such as carting or sledding) when you attach lines to the rings on either side, and, when you attach a leash to the front attachment point, as a no-pull harness. This is one time when something that works in more than one way is, in our opinion, a drawback rather than an ingenious benefit. We would prefer a dog that does pulling work to wear a harness that's meant for that purpose alone, and a different harness for the times he's meant to walk politely without pulling.

**PROS:** Very sturdy, with two-inch wide heavy-duty nylon, sturdy metal and plastic hardware, double-stitched (some places but not all). Straps adjust easily. It has a nice, nylon, rounded handle on the back for holding onto the dog, and an option for adding a variety of side patches (that attach with a hook-and-loop, Velcro-like fastener) with more than 35 text choices (such as "Service Dog" or "Working Dog").

**CONS:** Sides straps cross the dog's shoulders. Straps bunch when there is pressure on the leash. Definitely too bulky for some dogs.

## Easy Walk Harness

This harness is very similar in basic design to the Freedom Harness, SENSE-ation Harness, and Wonder Walker in that it has a girth strap and a strap that crosses the dog's shoulders horizontally. But whereas the Freedom Harness has a martingale strap across the dog's back, the Easy Walk has a martingale strap across the chest. That is, the leash-attachment ring rides on a loop of fabric and slides freely from side to side, depending on which side of the dog the leash tension comes from, but which tightens across the dog's chest when the tension increases.

Note that the black strap is supposed to be the belly strap. However, we found (accidentally) that it fits some dogs better with the belly strap on top.



Easy Walk Harness

**PROS:** Simple design. We love the nifty idea someone had to sew tiny labels inside the straps designating "shoulder," "chest," and "belly" to help with putting the harness on the dog properly.

**CONS:** Chest strap crosses the dog's shoulders. Considerable sagging and slippage due to the martingale loop in the chest strap. Shoulder strap buckle tends to sit in the dog's armpit, with potential for chafing. Also, again, this is the product of a shock collar company, and some pet owners (including me) won't buy products from this company.

## Walk Your Dog With Love

This is an interesting product. Its overall design is similar to the others with a single girth strap and a cross-the-chest strap, but it's a much lighter-weight version with a single leash attachment point and three places (front, top, and bottom) to adjust the fit. It doesn't seem like it could offer anywhere near the same strength or security of the other products.

**PROS:** Simple design, straps adjust easily. We like the reflective tabs on the front and sides.

**CONS:** Chest strap crosses shoulders. Both the nylon straps and plastic buckles and adjustment pieces have a light-duty feel. The front ring sticks out on a long strap, which means



Walk Your Dog with Love Harness



you cannot attach the leash to this and to the collar ring to prevent sagging – or rather, you could, but leash tension at that point would pull mostly on the collar, reducing the usefulness of the product’s sole attachment point.

## Final Notes

You may have different priorities and preferences and might make difference choices than we did. Most of the harness companies have useful videos and usage instructions on their websites. Check out the companies’ websites for more information before you buy.

*Author Pat Miller, CBCC–KA, CPDT–KA, is WDJ’s Training Editor.*

## Read More on These Topics

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## Comments (50)

A few comments: 1) Read the comments before deciding on a harness from this list. The experiences and reviews from others will help you decide, and there are harness suggestions not mentioned here. 2) It doesn't look like WDJ tested multiple dogs (different sizes, frames, builds). The dog in the photos appears to be the only test dog. 3) If you're struggling with issues with dogs that can slip the Easy Walk, I suggest trying the Freedom Harness. It's similar to the Easy Walk but has an extra strap that significantly reduces the chance a dog will slip the harness. Also, give the Freedom harness double leash a shot. Worked wonders to reduce my AmStaff's pulling! 4) Avoid the Balance harness!

I bought a Balance harness based on the 2017 Best Harness list and was completely unimpressed and irritated that WDJ rated this harness so highly. My gripes are exactly the same as other commenters have noted: a pain to adjust and slides around infinitely more than the Freedom harness I was hoping to replace. I personally would have rated it 2 stars as a front-attach harness. Hard to believe it made this list a second time, especially when (as at least one other reader pointed out) the Balance harness on the dog in the photos wasn't fitted properly (according to Blue 9's instructions) in the first place. It also looks almost exactly like multiple other harnesses that were rated lower. I'd like to know why the Balance harness received a higher rating than those other harnesses.

Posted by: Olivia Alexandra | July 19, 2018 2:33 PM

I purchased the blue9 harness on the advice of this article. Based on the photos and instructions on their website compared to the photos here the author of this article has not fitted the harness correctly.

Not only have I found it extremely difficult to fit the harness according to the manufacturer instructions I'm unable to use the plastic keepers because the webbing will not fit! I contacted the manufacturer and they said I'm wrong. My husband can't do it either.

I can't use the front clip when it's adjusted using the manufacturer instructions because it slides all over.

I'm not a happy customer.

Posted by: MyDogNeedsSpace | June 4, 2018 12:36 PM

I purchased the Perfect Fit Modular Fleece Harness for my Toy Manchester Terrier. I had been looking for a well fitting harness for years and this is the one! It is easy to put on and you can make it a perfect fit in the five areas of the harness.

Posted by: monaf | May 29, 2018 5:14 PM

I would like to suggest reviewing the Brilliant K9 harnesses for your next review.

Posted by: Cold Noses News | May 27, 2018 6:38 PM

Just a note to let you know that the Easy-Walk Harness was designed and created by Premier Pet Supplies. The Premier business was sold to PetSafe at a much later date. I am pleased you include it in your research.

Posted by: Mynevere | May 27, 2018 11:02 AM

Alysa ,  
I don't think they make harnesses with buckles anymore. Check out some yard sales or places like Craigs List or eBay.

Posted by: Chihuahua!!! | May 27, 2018 10:07 AM

The best harness I have is one I bought at a yard sale. It has metal clips.  
My rescue Chihuahua got scared when I snapped on those plastic clips.

Posted by: Chihuahua!!! | May 27, 2018 10:02 AM

We tried the Easy Walk on the advice of our trainer, for our puppy who's a puller. It virtually stopped the pulling once it fit right. The catch? If she's being stubborn and I have to pull her forward (instead of vice versa) she can slip an arm out of the harness. Found this out yesterday. Fortunately I caught her & got it back on but please : don't by a harness dogs can slip out of!

Posted by: Fairy Dogmother | April 29, 2018 8:11 AM

The Balance Harness is a truly an amazing harness! We have the harness available for purchase at Bancroft Pet Shop. Come check them out!

Posted by: Bancroft Pet Shop | April 16, 2018 10:59 AM

The Blue-9 Balance Harness is amazing. We carry them for \$10 cheaper than Amazon with free shipping! Check them out at [bancroftpets.com](http://bancroftpets.com)

Posted by: Bancroft Pet Shop | April 4, 2018 2:43 PM

Just a couple of points about the Perfect Fit.

They do not have to go on over the dog's head. If you leave three clips undone you can approach from the side. Ideal for dogs that don't like things going over their heads.

The fleece is really hard wearing. My oldest full Perfect Fit has been used on my tank of a lab in all sorts of environments including in the sea, sandy beach, gorseland, woods, etc., it is 5 years old and has been through the washing machine more times than I can count and is still going strong.

Posted by: Lisa P | February 1, 2018 1:45 AM

I purchased the Front Range Harness from Ruffwear for my 9 month old golden. I do like the way it fits and controls the dog. However I find that with the two clips at the top of the harness you must open to remove the harness quite awkward to release. There is very little room between the clips and the covering and your fingers are squeezed when attempting to release the harness. If you have gloves on, forget it. I barely make it with my smaller fingers and I would not purchase it again. In looking at the picture of the harness you can see how small the space is.

Posted by: leedy | January 14, 2018 9:49 AM

Great list, the Kurgo Harness is very very durable and comfortable for your dog as well. My Choco Lab is extremely strong and when he pulls he REALLY pulls. I don't want all that tension on his neck and with the Kurgo harness on he can pull all day long with no problem. check out this youtube review. [www.youtube.com/watch?v](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v)

Posted by: Steven1 | January 13, 2018 9:43 AM



I don't see the Tre Ponti harnesses mentioned here (Google it). We use a Forza Tre Ponti martingale harness with a broad leather chest strap and a girth strap that sits well behind the front legs. It just gives a little reminder hug if the dog pulls and always remains loose across the chest. Absolutely cannot come off. Doesn't interfere with gait. Very easy to put on. Not a solution for a serious puller, but for a pretty cooperative large dog (Newf) this harness is perfect. Beautifully made with high quality materials and a lock. They make many kinds of smaller dog harnesses too.

Posted by: S. Price | November 26, 2017 11:43 PM

After trying all of the top 3, we have finally landed on as close to a "Perfect Fit" harness as we will get for the 19-pound miniature schnauzer (who knew it would make so much difference...larger head, small neck, large chest).

- The over-the-head XS Balance harness needed adjustment each time to go over his head and then fit his neck. It twisted a lot.
- The buckle of the XS buckle version of the Balance harness made the neck length longer by the length of the buckle--only a problem as he is at the low end of the measurements....but it was too big. XXS was much too thin.
- Ruffwear Harness fit in chest, but was just too big in neck.
- Perfect Fit---with very helpful staff, and several pieces swapped, finally works.

I recommend that you call them, order all of the pieces you might need at one time if there is a question of size, and send back what you don't need in the end.

I landed on with the 15mm girth strap in M, XXS front, XS Top in the black reflective material. It is well made and seems durable. He is a 3 yo rescue--walking is improved with 3 months of diligence--but he still pulls with distractions (which is a lot, but manageable and better than a rear clip harness).

Posted by: Riley-roo | October 19, 2017 8:13 PM

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Posted by: Riley-roo | October 19, 2017 8:13 PM

I tried the Easy Walk, then the Freedom No Pull and did not like either. The Freedom harness rubbed up and down on my dog's upper legs / shoulders, rubbing bare spots. It did not seem comfortable and was certainly not good for the running we do. Now we have a Rough Wear harness which is great. Secure fit with lots of freedom of movement. My dog runs on a 50' lead connected to the back loop in open fields. She is pretty well loose leash trained but if she does lose her cool over something and lunge, the harness does not hurt her.

Posted by: NancySF | June 4, 2017 10:58 AM

I also bought a Balance Harness based upon this review. As others have said -- it is "difficult" to adjust, because it is so adjustable. I spent all of about 15 minutes on the process, and I suspect that after fine-adjustment after a little wear, I'll probably never adjust it again.

Others have complained about how it interferes with a conventional collar. None of the dogs in the article are wearing a regular collar and, as it happens, our dogs don't either. But regardless, all of these harnesses, if properly fitted, sit well--below the area of the neck (really, not on the neck at all) that a properly fitted conventional collar would be.

I've used sensation harnesses for years, and still do for a couple of our dogs. This harness fits so much better, and exactly as described. Thanks again for great advice WDJ!

Posted by: Mountaindogs | May 11, 2017 5:35 PM

I, too, purchased the Balance Harness and I'm not happy with it. The company has been very responsive to my requests for fitting tips. It's not a no-pull harness for us, but I do like the way my dog's shoulders are not restricted. But another issue is that the metal on the front clip is staining his white fur! I'm sure this would happen with any front-clip harness, unless it has that extra padding -- which I'll be looking for now!

Posted by: kpeck | May 3, 2017 10:10 PM

Thanks to this article. Based on your reviews, I bought the Balance harness XS for my 13# deep-chested Maltese/poodle. I love it. Easy to adjust, fits well, comfortable non-rigid nylon. I like that the width is 5/8" since many harnesses and collars for small dogs are too narrow (I have a Lupine that is only about 3/8" inches; her old Easy Walk seems too narrow and I've never liked the design). My dog actually does not mind wearing the Balance harness (she can be fussy about "equipment"). Very comprehensive review, very helpful in making my selection. I couldn't be more pleased. Thank you so much, WDJ!

Posted by: Carolyn M | April 25, 2017 8:49 AM

Based on these recommendations, we purchased a Balance Harness. It was difficult to adjust, and very difficult to work around the dog's collar to get a good fit at the neck. Notice that in all of the pictures in the article, the dog is not wearing a regular collar with tags. That gives an inaccurate perspective of how these harnesses work - unless you are advocating that the dog not wear a collar with tags when wearing a harness or that the tags be attached to the harness and the harness be worn all the time.

Posted by: JMT1414 | April 22, 2017 1:59 PM

The Balance harness is not a no pull harness. It was designed as a free from restriction harness. I found it to be difficult to fit with so many slides and has a tendency to roll to one side or the other. 4 paw rating, HA! I think not. We use the Wonder walker and do not have any trouble with it on our 125 LB Anatolian Shepard. It works great and allows our 8 year old daughter to walk him without any issues. As for riding high, it actually puts the stress from pulling on the dogs pressure points, and works with his natural push/pull reflex to teach him not to pull naturally. The people there are great, they will custom make you a harness in any size you might need from 200 Lbs to 4 Lbs. They will also make any color combination harness you would like. Who doesn't like options. My .02

Posted by: Maxcontrol | April 4, 2017 7:37 PM

Just find it incredible that you would not include the harness that is the #1 Best Seller on Amazon--probably outsells all of these combined! I don't want to name it--and therefore sound like an ad---but you can find it on your own, and I would strongly consider that product before most of these.

Posted by: longfellow | April 2, 2017 5:09 PM

I have your top rated Balance Harness and personally I think it is poor at best for a few reasons.....1st of all its hard to adjust and once you have it adjusted to fit as they want it the neck collar piece rides too high on the neck, 2nd the attachment for back piece and the neck piece is a triangle piece of metal putting a point on the withers. So many buckles and adjustment parts I don't see how it could be comfortable on the poor dog. The only good things I see about it is that the chest strap is to be adjusted at least 2 inches behind the elbows and that it does not cross the shoulders.

You can get an much better custom made harness to your dogs exact size for \$2 more plus another \$5 if you want the front ring.

Posted by: RichardB | March 31, 2017 5:11 PM

BullDogMomma - This article required harnesses have a front clip for consideration, which the Ruff Rider does not. It is also designed to be a travel harness/seat belt, not a regular walking harness. Frankly, their use of prong collars in photos and the excessively bulky look, combined with the amount of extra room/sagging in the photos, would keep me far away from it.

Posted by: Carstel | March 30, 2017 9:05 PM

I liked this article and almost bought a Front Range because I love Ruffwear's products. Then I remembered... Jerry Lee is my service dog. If I can't grab onto the top of his harness to steady myself or pick myself back up off the ground, the harness doesn't help me any.

We don't always wear his vest because I don't always need to hold onto his harness. Problem is, I don't know when I'll need to use him



because my issues are episodic, not full-time.

So... having said all that, how about reviewing top handle harnesses for those of us that need to use our dogs to deal with our disabilities? I'd like to get him into something better than the Kong top handle harness I'm using now.

Posted by: dalefuller | March 30, 2017 12:41 PM

I tried a Sensation harness but it moved around and gaps. I feel it changes gait which can cause injury. I run with my 75 pounder (the small one – high drive) and he just wears regular collar. I have 2 labs weighing 75 lb. and 102 lb. that I walk with together frequently. There is no "wonder" product except training and consistency. My smaller lab I took thru obedience, rally and agility. I weigh 132 lb versus 177 lb combined and they have 4 wheel drive! My bigger one has no formal training due to son in chemo when we got him. He is mellow but will be walking fine and then lunge at the last minute to pee on something. I have to be proactive and tell him to "leave it" and he will. Okay is release word to do as they please meaning they can go to end of leash and sniffle to hearts content. I do use sleepypod in vehicle for restraint, but complicated. Kurgan betrer but not as highly rated.

Posted by: Krisle66 | March 27, 2017 7:24 PM

I had an Easy-Walk harness for our small terrier mix. I liked the way it worked but because of her reactivity there were instances where she would twist and would dislodge the harness from her front legs, fortunately she never escaped. If there were a center strap down the front I think it would have been more effective. Also over time and use it seems to have stretched and the adjustment points would slip after readjusting.

Posted by: Kana | March 27, 2017 5:35 PM

I have a harness similar to your wonder walker and it works fine for my little Rat Terrier. But I do have a major complaint. I looked at all of your harnesses and each is fastened with those awful snap clicks. For someone with strong hands and fingers that is fine, but I am an older lady with little or no hand strength and it is almost impossible for me to open those snap clicks. I absolutely hate having to put the harness on due to that problem. What ever happened to buckles? Much easier to adjust than those darned snaps

Posted by: Alysa | March 27, 2017 3:51 PM

Excellent overview.

One gripe: for Sure-Fit Harness, the rating is lowered because the fit is too snug, but your model dog is clearly at the upper limit of this size. So...why not bump up a size for a better fit? There's overlap in the size ranges in this brand, so a dog at the upper end of the "medium" range would also fit at the lower end of the "large" range.

To be clear, it's still not a top notch front-clip harness. I just find it unfair to say it fits too snugly--fitting a wide range of sizes without impeding movement is the thing it actually IS good at.

Posted by: lyla | March 27, 2017 3:11 PM

Great that you did this article. But honestly, this list does not include the very best harness on the market. The Ruff Rider Roadie has been around since the 1990's. I've used it on all of my dogs and it is truly THE BEST! Please update your research to include this harness. It is durable, ergonomically correct, and very easy to use.

Thank you

Posted by: BullDogMomma | March 27, 2017 9:56 AM

I've always recommended the freedom no pull harness. My one complaint is the twisting at the wrist strap. That has turned a lot of people off. I personally love using Newtrix head halter. I love love using a small light leash and it is much easier for people with less upper body strength. The harness has been tolerated well since it does not tighten across the muzzle. Good article and nice to see the many options.

Posted by: psampsel | March 27, 2017 9:30 AM

Excellent article! Thank you very much for the thorough research. I'm very glad to know that Easy Walk is made by a company that makes shock collars -- I will not support them! I am using the Easy Walk now, and it sure does bag and slip in the front. I'm going to try the Perfect Fit Fleece harness. Thanks again!

Posted by: JoeysMom | March 27, 2017 2:30 AM

I've had really good success with Hug-a-Dog Harnesses for my small dogs. They are attractive, wear and wash well.

Posted by: luvnors | March 26, 2017 4:44 PM

Our Lab has the Ruffwear harness and she still pulls to the point she starts to cough. We went to the Gentle Leader as harness after harness failed to stop the pulling. She will heel but only for a short time no matter how much we work with her.

Posted by: Erdocsmom | March 26, 2017 4:37 PM

Thank you so much for writing this review. I, too, would love to see the same written about small dogs.

We have several issues, one dog hates having anything pulled over her head, to the point of hiding under the table (we're working on positive associations...). Both dogs have large heads in relation to their bodies (Cavalier and a Shih Tzu), so in order for the harness to fit over the head, the front (collar) strap has to be too loose.

We also have the "tangling in the lead" issue with front fastening harnesses due to short legs!

Posted by: Cavalier Matters | March 26, 2017 4:15 PM

I have a small dachshund so it will be interesting to see which of these would be great for her...I hate the pulling she does....and I am afraid of hurting her neck

Posted by: km.austin@outlook.com | March 26, 2017 3:41 PM

I need a harness for big rescue and old dogs that have neck injuries and do NOT pull. I don't need it to clip underneath but would like it to close and have the clip on the top. I also need it to be easy to put on preferably where they do not have to lift a leg to get into it. Some of them don't have the balance and strength to stand on three legs, even for a short time.

Posted by: Holly 1 | March 26, 2017 3:12 PM

For readers who wondered if these are suitable in-vehicle restraints.....NO! These harnesses are for walking, with some anti-pulling assistance provided by the harness design and attachment in front for your leash.

Look for the Center for Pet Safety on line. View their independent crash test videos....and you'll see the majority of in-vehicle gadgets for dogs, fail miserably at keeping a pet on the seat, or within any sort of containment. I travel extensively with my dogs for shows, but can't afford the 4 figure price tags of the vehicle crates which actually passed these safety tests.

Posted by: ardea | March 26, 2017 3:02 PM

I have been working with Reactive dogs for several years and require my students to use a body harness with two points of attachment. The Kurgo is on my list of recommended harnesses. All of their harnesses come with a seat belt tether and many owners like the "handle" on the back strap. I prefer the Kurgo over Ruffwear's Front Range because of Ruffwear's flimsy front hook, while Kurgo has metal attachment clips. However, Kurgo sizing seems to run smaller than what they claim. Also it does not seem to offer a good fit on long-bodied dogs. I've seen it work best on square body and bully-type dogs. I use a Balance harness for my own dog but he has backed out of it. That's why it is important to use a double-ended leash, or even two leashes.

Posted by: rockindogz | March 26, 2017 2:50 PM

Woody is such a cute model, and seems to be trying to be a good sport about it all, but maybe would just rather be napping! Great article, thank you.



Posted by: Natalie H. | March 26, 2017 2:09 PM

My dog is an escape artist and found out years ago to escape out of a harness by pulling backwards during a walk. The only escape proof harness that I've found is the Help em Up harness. In later years, I purchased the back part of the harness to assist my dogs back leg weakness. The handles on both the front harness and the back harness help me to control my dog better

Posted by: Jane Evans | March 26, 2017 1:40 PM

I have tried several different harnesses and still can't find a good fit for my terrier mix. The problem seems to be he is a good sized terrier type with short legs. Anything across the back causes a shoulder problem. Because he's so close to the ground the figure 8 types get caught under his leg if clipped in front. He is a strong puller and belly straps tend to move to his armpit. I just feel most harnesses I have tried are uncomfortable. Much as I hate to invest more money in yet another harness, we walk a lot, long walks, and I want him to be comfortable. I'm thinking I might get more adjustment in the Perfect Fit harness.

Does anyone else have this problem? I never see it addressed in any discussion of halter fit. I don't spend a lot of time working on his bad walking habits as we usually are in parks or forest preserves and I consider it to be his walk, not mine, so I let him wander as he will within reason.

Posted by: shortstuff | March 26, 2017 1:15 PM

Would any of these harnesses be suitable for restraint in the car?

Posted by: Dbseahorse | March 26, 2017 12:46 PM

Where can I find the best ones? My local pet stores do not carry them.

Posted by: Wilke34613 | March 26, 2017 12:35 PM

THANK you so much for doing this article...with nicer weather I have not excuse for not letting myself be walked! I had no idea the Easy Walk company made shock products...and it is the harness I've had for several years...I guess the flip side is due to my laziness, exhaustion and the heat or cold, it hasn't been used much (although we've had plenty of exercise in our enclosed yard). I need to review more closely...my fear is that the plastic so often used will break under pressure...and I am so insecure of my pup slipping out that I usually hook her collar ring and the harness ring onto the leash for double protection. I find it so awkward ...I need to use one hand to hold the leash and have one free for treats and back up...I also, forgive me, have used a soft choke collar just as a precaution due to the circumstances I have (too long to go into here and now).

Posted by: robin r | March 26, 2017 11:58 AM

My dogs don't pull but I like to use a harness collar instead of a neck collar because they have small heads and easily slip out of a neck collar. They usually don't wear va collar (we live in the country) but when we go RVing they do.

So my question is this: does your research show one to be comfortable for the dog to wear all the time?

Posted by: BisonAdog | March 26, 2017 11:58 AM

Any suggestions as to which harnesses do best for curly coated breeds, specifically goldendoodles?

Posted by: Slinky' mom | March 26, 2017 9:50 AM

Surprised not to see Kurgo tru-fit harness. I was looking for a harness a few months ago – I had used other harnesses and had 2 criteria: doesn't dig into armpits and has d-rings integral to harness (many harnesses have d-rings stitched into place – stitching can rip and often does—I wanted the d-rings threaded directly into the webbing that goes around dog). After doing much research, I chose the Kurgo which met both criteria. Previous harnesses (Freedom, etc) all dug into armpits when leash attached on back and dog pulls. You can get Kurgo with plastic or metal hardware – I chose the metal (which also doubles as car safety harness). I am very happy with the Kurgo – it is strong and well made.

Posted by: browndog | March 25, 2017 10:21 AM

Pat and Nancy, thank you so much for the wonderful content in the Journal! This article was very helpful in giving me some insight into additional no-pull harnesses on the market. I am a trainer who recommends that my clients start with the Easy Walk (due to cost since it can usually be found on-line for less than \$20 and knowing full well most of the dogs will out grow the harness quickly, unfortunately not trying to promote a company that also makes shock collars) and then graduate to the Freedom No-Pull harness, especially for my Golden Retriever and Golden Doodle clients as the additional strap down the sternum seems to help make the Freedom harness fit properly. I was very happy to learn about other great harness options available to suggest to my clients. One request for you ladies, can you please do the same review but for harnesses made to fit the smaller breed dogs/puppies? One of the big challenges I have in teaching loose-leash walking to my small breed dog clients is that most of the body harnesses that properly fit the small breed dogs all only have rings on the back of the harness. I have tried the petite and XS sizes in the Easy Walk and Freedom but in most cases those harnesses are just not small enough. The Easy Walk frustrates me (and my clients) because the metal used for the adjustment pieces feels cheap and flimsy, like someone just unbent and re-bent a paperclip, and never keeps the harness properly sized as it allows the straps to move. Most of my small breed dogs have figured out how to Houdini their way out of the Easy Walk. There may not be a great front-clip option out there in the small breed dog sizes but maybe some investigation and an article on your part could help motivate these manufacturers to design one for the little guys. I also enjoyed and am motivated by your articles regarding the importance of checking-in and the loose-leash walking article from the same issue as the harness review. Those behaviors are the key to training great loose-leash walking skills, especially for the small dogs for whom I struggle to find properly fitted front-clip harnesses. Thanks again for the great info!

Posted by: Amy Szabo | March 24, 2017 8:41 AM