



Janice Z Dog Training

behavior that works for you and your dog

Recommended Training Gear — Updated July 12, 2021

For most of my recommendations, I link to the manufacturer's websites. Most gear is also available from pet supply stores and online retailers. I do not receive any consideration or compensation for these recommendations — these are items I've used and recommend.

Harnesses

Harnesses remove the potentially damaging pulling force from your dog's neck and trachea, and are a good way to encourage loose-leash walking. Some excellent brands are:

- [Easy Walk Harness](#) (excellent to control pulling but the straps may chafe a dog with very short fur)
- [Ruffwear Harnesses](#)
- [Balance Harness](#); good for dogs who don't like things pulled over their heads

Collars

I recommend using a harness to walk your dog. If you use a collar, I recommend flat martingale collars, rather than a flat buckle collar. Because martingale collars will choke a dog if they pull hard (again, if your dog pulls that hard, use a harness), they are also difficult for a dog to slip or back out of.

A martingale with a buckle is easy to put on your dog. Martingales should never be left on when your dog is unsupervised, as they can snag and choke the dog.

[If It Barks has good options](#), as do most pet-supply stores.

Leashes

Most of the training we do will be on a standard 6' leash.

I prefer 6' Biothane leashes, a synthetic leather which washes clean easily (important since my dogs drag their leashes on woodland walks), and is soft on the hands. Six-foot cotton, leather, and nylon leashes also work well.

I get my Biothane leashes custom-made at [CSJ Creations on Etsy](#), and they are available at many online vendors. Buy a Biothane leash with riveted, not sewn, connection points.

Biothane leashes are heavier than cotton and leather, so 1/4" width for smaller dogs and 1/2" or 3/8" for larger dogs is adequate.

I do not recommend metal chain leashes or retractable leashes, which give you little control when walking or training your dog because they don't allow you to manage the leash well.

For hands-free walks or jogs, I use [the "Buddy System" waist leash](#).

Head Halters

Dogs who are strong pullers or reactive to other dogs do well in a head halter. I use a Gentle Leader on my dog Daisy (right) to reduce pulling and reactivity.



We'll discuss whether this is appropriate for your dog and, if so, teach your dog to love wearing it by pairing the halter with delicious snacks.

- [Gentle Leader](#)
- [Halti Headcollars](#)

Bait Pouch

For fast and efficient training, you will need a pouch that clips onto a pocket or belt to store food treats. They'll be quicker to access than reaching into a plastic bag in your pocket and speedy delivery of rewards makes for very efficient training. Some brands I like:

- [Ruffwear Treat Trader](#)
- [PetSafe Treat Pouch](#)
- [Trek & Train Bait Bag and Rapid Rewards pouch from Doggone Good](#)
- You can relive the '80s and use a fanny pack; [I love this fanny pack from Ruffwear](#) and these from [Woof Cultr](#)

Training Treats

To teach your dog, we will use what rewards-based trainers like me call "high-value" treats — something *way* more enticing than his everyday kibble. Your dog will likely find some of these food treats more appealing than others.

The common denominator is that they can be cut into very small pieces (and pinched into ever smaller pieces when working with your dog) and your dog can eat them quickly and be ready for the next training step, to keep things moving along efficiently. I tend to use:

- Diced cubes of Pecorino Romano or aged cheddar cheese (I buy big blocks at Costco)
- Diced cubes of Happy Howie's food log
- Pieces of sliced deli roasted turkey or roast beef
- Diced boiled chicken breast
- Diced cooked hot dogs
- Homemade tuna fudge (very thrifty but a little smelly on your fingers)
- Turkey jerky or sausage made for dogs (I stock up on these when they are on sale at Costco)
- Pupperoni and Beggin' Strips from the supermarket

Walkies "Stuff" Holders

For neighborhood walks I use a small carabiner to clip a waste bag holder and a roll of waste bags to the treat pouch (yes, we always carry treats!). Dog waste holders I like are:

- Ruffwear Pack Out Bag: <https://ruffwear.com/products/pack-out-poop-bag>
- The DooLoop: <https://thedooloop.com/>

Muzzles

Our dog Petey (right) wears a muzzle on all his walks because he is a persistent eater of items found on the street and in the woods.



The muzzle allows him to sniff to his heart's content but not eat anything. I use and recommend the Baskerville muzzle, and we also have a custom BUMAS muzzle for him.

We will discuss whether it's appropriate for your dog to wear a muzzle and how to teach her to love it.

Many very sweet dogs may need temporary muzzling for a variety of reasons during their lives, such as being introduced to a new, unknown animal or child or transportation when injured and in pain.

Give Your Dog A Job Food Toys

Dogs are domesticated wolves — and fairly recently domesticated, evolution-wise. Most animals spend their waking hours looking for sustenance and many dogs are no exception — in many ways feeding them twice a day in a bowl is not a kindness! Besides working for food during training, an easy way to engage their brain is to make them work for their meals by emptying food toys. My favorites are:

- [Kongs](#) that have been stuffed and frozen ([watch my video about Super Easy Kong stuffing](#))
- [Outward Hound slow-feeder bowls](#)
- [Westpaw Toppl](#)

- [Paw5 snuffle mats](#) (snuffle mats are also a fun [DIY project](#))

Free Toys

Take empty cardboard boxes such as shoe boxes, pizza boxes, and delivery boxes and throw in a handful of kibble and a special treat like a piece of cheese. Depending on your dog's ability, either tape the box shut or close it and poke a few holes so the kibble can fall out. One of our dogs will nose the box around the yard to empty it, and the other will simply tear it apart. Both are having lots of fun! Monitor your dog so she doesn't eat any cardboard.

We have daily kibble hunts in our backyard — we throw a few handfuls of kibble around, shout “kibble hunt” and let the dogs root around looking for the snacks. [Here's a video of my dogs doing this in the snow.](#)

Nowadays, most veterinarians do not recommend stuffed marrow bones, as they can injure a dog's teeth.

Crates

A crate is never a place of punishment: it will become his sleeping place, a retreat when visitors come over, and his refuge from the tumult of the household.



[The Whole Dog Journal](#) has [a good roundup of different types of crates.](#)

Pro tip: if you didn't have luck training your dog to use a crate, start over with another type. I can help with an incremental training plan.