

A dog who has a definitive leader is a happier and better behaved dog.

With the popularity of Hollywood actors or “dog trainers”, the words Pack Leader and Dominance have entered the mainstream vocabulary, often times with incorrect interpretations.

This handout will help you be the leader of your pack without involving physical confrontation, which is both counterproductive and dangerous. A dog that can only be controlled through physical force, or a leash, is not a well trained dog. With correct positioning as the pack leader, you will gain respect from your dog and have a mutually beneficial relationship.

There is a difference between loving your dog and spoiling him. Allowing your dog to be pushy and demanding does them no favors and contributes to behavioral issues. Dogs need strong, benevolent leaders to feel secure and, without one, they can become reactive and fearful. The following suggestions will help you be the leader your dog needs you to be.

- **Wait at the Door** - Ask your dog to sit before going through any door or gate. He must sit and he must not move until you say "OK".
- **Four on the Floor** - Do not allow jumping. Ignore your dog's attempts to get your attention by jumping on you. Turn your back, walk away, walk through your dog, etc... and **only** pay them attention when they behave correctly.
- **Ask for Petting** - Only pet your pup on your terms NOT when they demand it.
- **Sit for Feeding** - Same as waiting at the door. Make your pup sit before you give them their food dish.
- **Body Block** - Make your dog respect your imaginary space around you.
- **Games We Play** - Start and stop all games on your terms and avoid rough play.

Using the above techniques will allow you to correctly position yourself as your dog's pack leader and will result in a better relationship.

