



## Loose Leash Walking Posture

Loose leash walking is all about technique of the handler. This article shows the posture I recommend holding yourself in to maximize your stability. Remember that your source of strength is in your legs and torso, no your arms.

### Part 1. The Anchor Hand

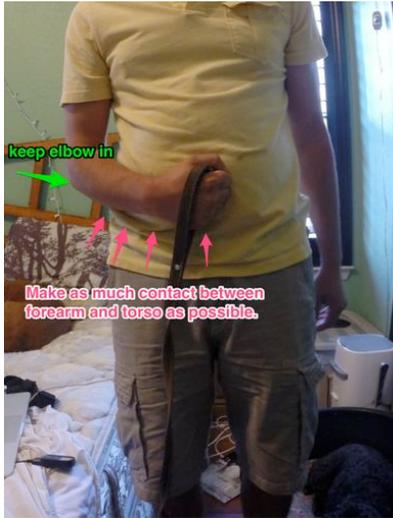
Step 1. Put right hand through leash loop, as if "shaking it's hand".



Step 2. Close fist and bring elbow in at torso.



Step 3. Pivot fist in so that part of fingers between first two knuckles are pushed flush against stomach or belt line, and forearm is making as much contact as possible. Your elbow should remain "in" as much as possible.



A boat anchor lodges into the bed of a body of water to keep the boat from moving. The more loosely the anchor is lodged, the less effective it will be. The anchor hand works on the same principle. Once set, we want the hand and leash anchored to our torso as securely as possible.

At this stage you should have the leash loop anchored to your torso using the right hand, with your left hand free. This gives a full 6 feet of leash, which is too much leash in most cases.

## **Part 2. The Sweet Spot**

We'll call the point on the leash that gives the best tradeoff between your control and the dog's freedom the "Sweet Spot". This will be under control of your left hand. Generally, I recommend that the sweet spot gives the dog 2-3 feet of freedom. She should be able to move forward and sniff with the leash hanging loosely, but not have enough where they can wrap themselves around you easily. However, this may depend on the relative heights of you and your dog. Experiment! I can also help you find the sweet spot in class. Tip: Once you've found the sweet spot, mark it by tying a knot or a piece of duct tape.

Step 4. Grab the leash at the sweet spot that gives you the desired length using your forehand faced *outward*.



Step 5. Pull the elbow in at torso and the sweet spot up to your chest. This will tighten the leash at the desired length.



Step 6. We want the leash to be loose at the sweet spot. To loosen the leash without compromising the sweet spot length, bring left hand down so that the left hand knuckles meet the right hand knuckles.



Step 7. Secure the sweet spot of the leash in the anchor hand by grabbing with the forefingers.



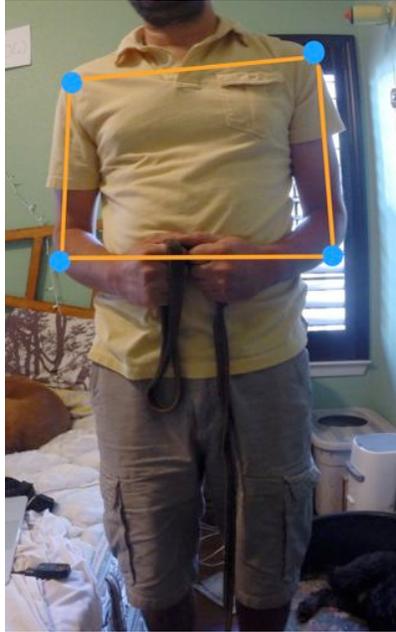
You should now have the leash secured at the sweet spot in both hands.



Because the sweet spot is now securely set in your anchor hand, you can use your left hand to make adjustments to the length as needed. Perhaps you are walking past a particularly busy area, for example, and need to shorten the leash. You can find a new sweet spot without ever reducing stability, and repeat Step 5.



Your final walking position should be such that if you were to connect your shoulders and elbows using straight lines, it would form as tight of a rectangular shape as possible.



It may feel a little awkward at first, but as this posture becomes ingrained in your motor memory, you will find that you will begin adopting a more natural walking stance without compromising stability.

The most common problems are:

1. Elbows too far out.
2. Wrists not firmly pressed against torso.

Use your legs to make turns/reposition your dog! Your arms/hands should do as little work as possible!