

Collars and Leads: Essential for Control

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Young puppies should be fitted with a plain, soft collar and a lead of average length (about 4-6 ft). A lead and collar of a sturdy but light material (such as nylon) usually work well to start. These are good tools to use while your puppy is learning to walk with you. Avoid anything too heavy while your puppy is getting used to the feel of a collar and lead.

As your puppy grows, there are a variety of tools to help with training. [Extra long leads](#) (about 15 ft) can be helpful for keeping your dog safe and attached to you while still allowing enough extra space for you to begin teaching the "come" command.

stay in control

If your dog is walking you (rather than the other way around), we recommend a head collar, such as the [Gentle Leader](#). These products work by exerting gentle pressure on the back of the head and top of the dog's muzzle, the same areas another dog would put his mouth on to let your dog know that he should stop that behavior. Since the pressure is exerted only when the dog pulls, it encourages him to walk by your side, allowing the collar to hang loosely. In addition, these collars are fitted so that you are able to control the direction of the dog's head from the side; this concept is similar to fitting a horse with a halter: once you have control of the head, the body will automatically follow.

When a dog pulls hard against a collar, there is a lot of pressure against the trachea (windpipe). A [harness](#) distributes the pressure over the chest, instead. Harnesses can be helpful for dogs with neck or spinal problems, or for dogs with a condition called collapsing trachea. We also recommend harnesses for dogs who pull so hard that they cough or gag.

life saver

Because safety is as important as health, we firmly believe in always attaching a [nametag](#) to your pet's collar. They are a cheap, easy way to add identification and your phone number. Don't forget to get a vacation tag when you travel with your pet.