



Super Dogs

Managing the Superintendent's Best Friend

By SUE MILLS-KOTHE
Total Recall School for Dogs

(Pictured above is Sam, a two-year-old, who "watches over Cannon Golf Club for geese, squirrels, gophers and his favorite - the members!" said Nancy Diepenbrock, Assistant Superintendent at Cannon GC.)

To Leash or Not To Leash That Is the Question

Spring is here and walking paths and public parks are full of people and their dogs. Having control over your dog is of utmost importance for their safety as well as other dogs and their owners. The proper collar and lead are important tools when taking your animal out in public.

As a professional trainer I have experienced as many different styles of collars and harnesses as there are students. While I teach positive reinforcement training with the use of praise and treats, I expect my own dogs and my students' to be under control at all times and thus I suggest that strong willed animals to be collared with a prong collar, not for the physical restraint, but rather the ability to impose constant pressure around the dogs neck when necessary during training.

If you have ever walked a dog with a choke or band collar you may have noticed that they will often pull against the resist- ing force. This is a natural dog reaction. The prong collar encloses and applies consistent pressure around the neck confusing the dog as they know not what to pull against. You, the pack leader,

have instant control. However, and I need you to pay close atten- tion to this statement, proper use of a prong style collar requires professional training for desired results! If you are having chal- lenges with your dog seek a reputable trainer to help you be the very best owner and thus also have the very best dog.

The negative perception of cruelty while using the prong collar is just that, a misguided opinion, for this style of collar is actually a very gentle way to train your rambunctious pal under the instruction of a qualified handler. Please never use a head harness for if quick correction is needed, a hard tug on the lead could cause severe neck injury. Also, choke type chains can cause harm to the trachea of strong pulling dogs.

I believe that most towns have 'leash laws' but a few people think they are exempt from following the rules, creating a bad image for responsible owners. We have heard of many incidents where dogs are running loose where children are playing. Dogs have a strong prey drive and chase instinct, so if children are running and chasing each other, dogs will want to get in on the action. That often leads to someone getting bit. There are now may "dog parks" for those that feel your dog needs to 'be free.' They can run to their hearts content without a leash.

At Total Recall we teach the use of two types of training leashes; a six foot for learning how to heel, sit and other basic com- mands and a longer 15 plus lead for encouraging recall. Besides verbal praising and treats, gentle correction will help you train your dog to be a well managed member of your family.

My dogs are well-trained, but if we were to walk or run on a walking path together, they would be on a leash. Not only for respect for others but also for the safety of my dogs. With this in mind, remember not all dogs or even owners want to meet other dogs.

Please have respect for others and keep your dogs on a leash. Then everyone will be able to enjoy the parks and walking paths. Make your dogs a good neighbor; train them, they are a part of your family and an extension of you.



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