



STARTING OFF ON THE RIGHT PAW – DVGRR TIPS FOR ADOPTERS

Make Walking Fun – Try an Easy Walk™ Harness!

Years ago, the options for keeping your unruly dog under control on a walk were pretty much limited to choke collars and prong collars. Thank goodness we no longer need to use either of those outdated tools. Today, dog owners have much more humane (and effective!) choices. Our personal favorite? The Easy Walk™ Harness made by Premier Pet Products®.

We've been using and recommending the Easy Walk™ front-attaching harnesses at DVGRR for several years, and we've seen them make a *huge* difference with many Golden Retrievers.

Key Advantages

- FAR better control over a dog on leash than with a collar alone. The dog can still pull to some extent, but the harness distributes the pressure differently, so the handler is much more in control. Taking a walk becomes enjoyable for both human and canine, not a chore!
- No stress or strain on the dog's neck, as with a traditional collar and leash. The dog isn't choking or gagging himself at the end of a leash.
- The vast majority of dogs take to the harness with very little problem – they do not find it uncomfortable or unpleasant. (This is a major advantage over head halters, which are also good walking options but much more likely to cause stress for the dog.)
- Once the harness is fitted properly, it's very simple to put on and take off.
- Reasonable cost – the Easy Walk™ is available in either a harness/leash combination ([\\$30.00 in our store](#)) or harness alone (\$24.00). Either way it is well worth the price!

The Proper Fit

It's essential to fit the harness properly before using it to ensure that it works effectively and won't accidentally come off the dog. The Easy Walk™ comes in eight sizes, from Petite to Extra Large. We carry the Medium, Medium/Large, and Large in Pap's Place, since those sizes work for most Golden Retrievers. If you purchase a harness from our store, we're happy to help with the initial fitting. We have samples of each size to determine which one is best and can assist with properly adjusting the straps.

You should only have to worry about these initial adjustments once. The chest straps may need to be tightened a bit every few months, but other than that the only reason you would need to make further adjustments is if the dog's weight changes significantly.

Premier has produced two excellent videos that illustrate the proper fitting technique. You can find them using these links: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxfMiC-B6tk> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QEM9zl4ngs>. When you watch, note how the assistant is using treats to help keep the dog happy and distracted while the fitting is taking place.

On and Off

The company includes on/off instructions in the package, but we have also developed our own that work well. (These steps assume that the fitting adjustments have already been made and you are ready to head out for a walk.)



1. First, note that the harness has two buckles, although you generally only need to use one of them. Also note that one strap is a contrasting color. This is the strap that will go under the dog's belly. Open the buckle on the belly strap and leave the other one closed.



2. Use the Easy Walk™ tag on the shoulder strap as your guide. Start by holding the harness with the tag on your right hand side, facing away from you. Visualize the dog's head going through the opening below.



3. Slip the harness gently over your dog's head. If the dog is anxious or nervous, use treats to help make the process a pleasant experience. Once your dog learns that putting on the harness means a walk is coming, he's likely to cooperate very nicely.



4. Once the harness is on the dog, take the belly strap (the one with the contrasting color) and slip it under your dog's belly, behind his legs. Snap the belly strap together with the shoulder strap. Be careful not to lean over your dog when doing this as that can be perceived as threatening to the dog.



5. Attach the leash to the D-ring at the front, on the chest strap. For added security, you can attach the leash to both the harness *and* the dog's martingale collar. This gives you extra control plus ensures that if dog inadvertently slips out of harness, he will not get loose. Be sure the collar has enough slack that it is not uncomfortable for the dog.

6. To remove, simply unbuckle from the side and slip over the dog's head.

A walk with your dog should be one of life's great pleasures, and it also helps keep him healthy and trim. If you are skipping or minimizing walks because you're tired of being dragged down the street by your headstrong canine, please give the Easy Walk™ harness a try. It may make all the difference in the world!