

So What's This "Indoor Drag line" Thing Anyway and why is it useful for my dog?*

This smooth braided cylindrical nylon 10 ft. cord with a clip on one end but no handle is designed to be attached to the dog by a head halter, collar or harness but minimize getting caught up on furniture. Once you understand this handy little gadget, you'll wonder how you ever lived without it.

This isn't just for "convenience" so that you don't have to get up off the couch. Remember that sometimes our attempts to discourage certain behaviors can actually have the opposite effect. For example, let's say your dog is doing something really annoying such as barking at someone across the street walking their dog. First you might scold him from across the room ("Fido be QUIET", which didn't work) then you get up and pull the dog away from the window to stop him from disturbing the peace. You may think you've discouraged your dog, but in fact, your dog likely feels *rewarded* by your attention in spite of your intent. **Negative attention** can be *quite rewarding* to dogs as well as some (often young) humans. By getting up and going to your dog you have inadvertently reinforced the barking that was driving you crazy. Unpleasant or negative attention is better than no attention at all.

This is where the indoor drag line can be truly amazing; this training aid can act like a "remote control" for your dog (especially when paired with the Gentle Leader head halter). When he begins barking inappropriately (or the bark may have started as a wanted signal that someone is coming to the door but now it should STOP since you have taken over what happens next) you can ignore him (no attention to reward the dog with) and instead give a gentle pull on the drag line to distract your dog and signal that you need the dog to change his focus. This is especially effective paired up with an appropriate head halter such as the Gentle Leader since the pull on the drag line will close his mouth and give him a "mother/leader" dog mild "acupressure" correction, which helps STOP the barking. In this scenario you did not even speak to the dog. Another example is a boisterous dog pushing, jumping or mounting young children in excitement. The drag line can be used holding closely (or a leash at this stage) so that you can be near the youngsters initially to assure your dog behaves appropriate but then you can slowly "wean" yourself away up to 10 ft. so that your pet learns "all bets are on" even when the adult is not in the middle of play and kids are still to be treated with appropriate respect and not jumped on. This helps to make the appropriate behavior not contingent on the adult handler being right next to the child. (CAVEAT: FOR AN ABUNDANCE OF CAUTION **NEVER LEAVE DOGS AND SMALL CHILDREN WITHOUT SUPERVISING ADULT WITHIN ARM REACH! THEY CAN BOTH BE VERY UNPREDICTABLE IN THEIR BEHAVIOR ESPECIALLY TO EACH OTHER**)

Another use is to "back up" **pre-taught** instructive obedience commands such as "QUIET," "LEAVE IT," "Place" (e.g. "go to your bed/crate"), "Come here," "OFF" (as in off furniture or people) and others. In this scenario the dog must have been appropriately taught what these commands mean in an easy training environment and be well known to the dog before they are used at a time when the dog is more highly aroused and distracted. Using the previous barking example, if the dog already knew what "QUIET" meant you can "deploy" that command and help increase the reliability by using the indoor drag line if the dog does not respond promptly. The goal here is to teach the dog with positive motivation and rewards (praise, treats, toys, etc.) how to succeed and get rewarded once a command is given but, if the dog thinks the command is just a fun game to do with his person when nothing serious is going on and can be ignored when he thinks he should be doing something else, pulling the drag line can help remind him that you are directing him with a command you expect to be followed and that ignoring you is not an option. You are going to be consistent and will require an appropriate response (stopping the barking) with your direction so that you can reward him when he complies. Either way, once the barking has stopped you are free to reward and reinforce this good behavior. With consistency on your part, after a while when your dog detects something that used to elicit annoying barking, instead of barking his head off he'll be sitting quietly and waiting for a reward such as your praise. The Indoor Drag line can be used for many other problems within your house and is especially effective in helping children gain control and leadership of your dog throughout the day.

If your dog is likely to **chew** fabric leashes you can use a strongly aversive taste repellent on the indoor drag line BEFORE attaching the drag line on your dog to help *minimize* chewing of the drag line. This web link gives some products that can help for these dogs:

<http://pets.webmd.com/taste-deterrents>).

Caution: *The Indoor Drag line should only be used when you are home and able to supervise and should never be used with a collar that can choke a dog (e.g. "choke" or "training" collar, "pinch" collar, etc.) and can even be risky if you have a dog that pulls hard against a regular buckle collar that is around the dog's neck if he gets caught on something. It is safest to use with a Gentle Leader head halter, some other models of head halter (several other models require the handler maintain tension on the leash to avoid the dog getting it off their head), body harnesses and other restraints that are highly unlikely to choke a dog if it gets caught.*

To order indoor drag lines for your pet/business see this site: www.sdvethavior.com/whats_new_2.html

* This document is modified from a section taken out of the Gentle Leader training manual (has been out of print for several years now). The original Gentle Leader and training manual were created by Dr. RK Anderson and Ruth Foster who co-invented the Gentle Leader and also this Indoor Drag Line.