

HARNESS SELECTION TIPS GENTLE TOUCH PET TRAINING

I started out with a quick list and realized this is actually a pretty lengthy discussion. In short, here's a few important points:

Decide what kind of harness your dog needs:

- No-pull harness used as a management tool until you've taught your dog to walk on a loose leash
- A sport harness for other purposes (Nose Work, Agility, etc.)
- Maybe you're one of the few lucky ones and your dog just doesn't pull or is so small that they just don't pull much.
- Make sure you get the correct fit and check the fit regularly.
- Desensitize your dog if necessary, to the harness and especially the harness going over their head.

You need to find a comfortable harness for your dog's body. To order online, be sure to go through the measurements recommended by the manufacturer to choose the correct size. Be aware that young dogs – 3-8 months old, may go through 2 or more harnesses as they go through a major growth spurt. Most dogs have reached close to full body weight by 8 months old. However, they will still fill out more in the chest area and still may require a larger size as they mature into adulthood. Check the fit regularly. Be aware that every dog's body is different. It's harder when you can't try the harness on. Be willing to possibly go through a few harnesses before you find the "perfect" one for your dog.

Also be aware that some dogs are not comfortable with having something put over their head. Make sure there's plenty of room for the harness to go over their head and desensitize them to this by offering a treat as they put their head in the harness and offering a treat as soon as it's over their head. Do not force and do not chase your dog. Start out spending time getting them used to equipment if necessary.

I choose different harnesses for different reasons. I usually select one harness for walking and training (no-pull until they are trained to walk on a loose leash). And I usually select a different harness for a dog sport such as Nose Work or Agility. (I do not use a no-pull harness for this, but a "sport" harness or comfortable soft harness.)

You also have to decide if your dog pulls. Ninety percent of them will. And yet, I've known a few – particularly small dogs - that just don't pull much at all and have not needed a no-pull harness. For instance, my 10 lb. Chinese Crested Powderpuff is not a big puller and never has been. Oh, but my 16 lb. Pug can pull like a Husky!

For a no-pull harness, the harness has a connection for the leash in the front of the dog's chest (to help to minimize the dog's opposition reflex) - that's what makes it a no-pull harness. Especially for larger, stronger dogs I recommend one of the harnesses that can hook up in front and on top

(in the “usual” place) so that you have two points of pressure. These can be used with two leashes. They also make leashes with a dual connection for this purpose.

There is also discussion as to the best kind of no-pull harness. There are some brands that have a horizontal strap across the front. One of the very first no-pull styles available was the Sensation Harness and quickly followed by the Easy Walk Harness. I used this style for years – as it was the only style available. However, they do not fit all dogs the same and for some dogs the front strap is way too low on the dog’s chest and it impedes movement of the front legs and shoulders. Other companies such as Two-Hounds Design and Sensation Harness (the very original), have that strap a bit higher and may work OK for some dogs. However, this is on a case-by-case basis, and I see many that do not fit correctly being used. Examples are shown below so that you can see the difference in style. Again, keep in mind these are examples. There are plenty of companies making good no-pull harnesses these days.

Designs of No-Pull Harnesses I can recommend:

Many can be found on www.cleanrun.com or Amazon.com.

Balance Harness – Blue9 Pet Products: <https://www.blue-9.com/Balance-Harness-Buckle-Neck>

Front Range Harness - Ruffwear: <https://ruffwear.com/collections/dog-harnesses/products/front-range-everyday-dog-harness>

Perfect Fit Modular Fleece Harness - Clean Run: (modular buy 3 p separately) :
https://www.cleanrun.com/product/perfect_fit_modular_fleece_lined_dog_harness_girth_strap/index.cfm?ParentCat=202

RCPets – Ultimate Control Harness: <https://www.rcpets.com/DogHarnesses/Ultimate-Control-Harness/Product.aspx>

Pet Walking Harness - Kurgo: https://www.amazon.com/Kurgo-Harness-Walking-Training-Included/dp/B00164SZOW/ref=redir_mobile_desktop?ie=UTF8&aaxitk=oVkJGHKSvZVK6c-EejhPPzg&hsa_cr_id=1805060980601&ref_=sb_s_sparkle

Designs of the “old-style” no-pull harness. These are not my favorite anymore as they do not fit all dogs well. This was the original style of no-pull harness and we used to use them. If you decide on this style make sure this fits your dog correctly and does not impede front leg/shoulder movement. If the strap falls too low on your dog’s chest, then this may not be your best choice.

No Pull Dog Harness & Leash - Two-Hounds Design: Leash with two attachments: (This is a good company and their products last a long time.)
https://www.amazon.com/Hounds-Design-Freedom-Adjustable-Comfortable/dp/B00A7EXSA8/ref=sr_1_6?crid=2CBCU0Z6W7WWA&dchild=1&keywords=no-pull+dog+harness&qid=1587143606&srefix=no-pull+%2Caps%2C224&sr=8-6

Sensation No-Pull Harness: (The very original no-pull available.)

https://www.amazon.com/Softouch-SENSE-ation-No-Pull-Harness-Black/dp/B0013JWEAG/ref=sr_1_2_sspa?crid=2GK3JMFYSIHNU&dchild=1&keywords=sensation+no+pull+dog+harness&qid=1587145941&sprefix=sensation+.aps,241&sr=8-2-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFFMDBJRVE1RUJJNEgmZW5jcnlwdGVkSWQ9QTA2Mzg3OTkxT1U3N1pEMDNXR0ZYJmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTFFTDI1OVBVM1VVRkwmd2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGYmYWN0aW9uPWNsaWNRUmVkaXJlY3QmZG9Ob3RMb2dDbGljaz10cnVl

Easy Walk Harness: (I see many of these that fit dogs incorrectly and the front strap is way too low on the dog's chest.)

https://www.amazon.com/PetSafe-Deluxe-Harness-Large-Apple/dp/B015TNVYRU/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crid=1ECY8PM59S8JY&dchild=1&keywords=easy+walk+harness&qid=1587145590&sprefix=easy+walk+.aps,252&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUE4U0dIMlJFSINBSVYmZW5jcnlwdGVkSWQ9QTAzNTA1NTgzRjVQS0pGUk1lWdDdGJmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTA0MDk4OTUzOU1EUk9TMUhdSjA3JndpZGldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZW50JmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJlZQ==

Also, I **DO NOT** recommend any styles that go under the dog's legs and then tighten up where their skin is sensitive. This is uncomfortable and uses negative reinforcement. It may cause your dog to hate harnesses for the rest of their life. (Here's an example of the kind **NOT** to get:

https://www.amazon.com/YUP-Pet-Halter-Large-Black/dp/B0006L2QXM/ref=sr_1_3?crid=2ZMBVD8WPV6IX&dchild=1&keywords=sporn+no+pull+dog+harness&qid=1587144039&sprefix=sporn+no+pull%2Caps%2C223&sr=8-3

If your dog does not pull or is small, it's possible you will not need a no-pull harness. If this is the case, I prefer what is called a step-in harness (does not go over their head) for small dogs that do not pull. This is for comfort and no need to put the harness over their head. I also like a few sport harnesses such as the Hurtta and Comfortflex for sports or other activities.

Step-in Harness: Puppia Soft Vest Dog Harness:

https://www.chewy.com/puppia-soft-vest-dog-harness/dp/132240?utm_source=google-product&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=hg&utm_content=Puppia&utm_term=&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIh6LnxP3v6AIVLSCtBh3EYQ3vEAQYAiABEgJS8fD_BwE

Hurtta Casual Padded Dog Harness:

https://www.amazon.com/Hurtta-Casual-Padded-Harness-Heather/dp/B07548JZYK/ref=sr_1_5?dchild=1&keywords=hurtta+dog+harness&qid=1587144477&sr=8-5

Comfortflex Sport Harness:

https://www.cleanrun.com/category/dog_supplies/dog_harnesses_and_dog_halters/index.cfm

or

https://www.amazon.com/PetPDC-ComfortFlex-Sport-Harness-Medium/dp/B005S6WNHE/ref=sr_1_1?crid=11OTINNNROCDZ&dchild=1&keywords=comfortflex+sport+harness&qid=1587144775&sprefix=comfortflex+sport+harness,aps,245&sr=8-1