



Retractable Leash Etiquette

A Guide for ROARs (Rovers on a Retractable)

DO: Be aware that retractable leashes have a reputation for breaking, snapping, and otherwise failing.

DON'T: Let your dog's retractable get tangled around another dog's body. The friction from the moving tape or string can cause serious injuries.

DO: Lock your leash to 6 feet or less while walking your dog in public around other dogs and/or people (not all people want to be approached by your dog).

DO: Use them in unpopulated areas, such as the woods or your own back yard.

DON'T: Use them with a gentle leader or other training tools. The point of those tools are generally to teach your dog not to pull, to engage with you, or for better control. It's a confusing message to a dog to be on both a retractable and a head harness or corrective collar at the same time.

DO: Purchase the best quality retractable you can afford. Typically the tape ones are stronger than the string ones.

DON'T: Expect to teach your dog to stop pulling while using these. Your dog is enjoying pulling ahead and wandering off.

DO: Work on your dog's recall at other times, so that you're not just relying on the leash to gather your dog back.

DO: Be aware that those bulky handles are difficult to hold on to, if your dog hits the end of the line at full speed.

DON'T: Let your dog wander off while in public places like the pet store or at the vet's office. If your dog can walk away from you, into another aisle or across a room, the point of using a leash (for management) has been defeated.

DO: Consider them a potentially useful tool for environmentally fearful dogs, dogs that are semi-feral with humans, or other dogs that may need some extra space while they are building confidence.

DON'T: Drop the leash, especially if you're working with a fearful dog. The bulky handle "chases" behind them, making a terrible scraping sound on pavement, further terrifying the dog.

DO: Be aware that Consumer Reports notes that people have suffered serious injuries, including finger amputations and bad burns from retractable leashes.

DON'T: Walk your large reactive dogs on retractables in any place you may encounter their triggers. It only takes a second to miss the opportunity to lock the leash and then you've got a thrashing dog, fifteen feet ahead of you.