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# TRIP TO THE PARK

## Why bother training for public spaces?

So, you can confidently and safely take your dog with you anywhere and make the experience an enjoyable one for you both.

## How to prepare.

Step 1. Think about the types of challenges you are likely to encounter in a park:

- Other dogs, people, running children, trash on the ground, picnics, Frisbees and balls, small animals, people who want to pet your dog.

Step 2. Decide how you will handle potential challenges. Will you...

- Move away to create distance?
- Use treats as a food lure to recapture or keep your dog's attention on you?
- Use cues your dog is well practiced at (sit, down, stay, leave it, heel) to help guide your dog's behavior? Which will you use in each situation? Use only the behaviors you and your dog have encountered in class so far—you can add more as you complete more weeks of class.

Step 3. Decide if you're ready to say hello to new people and dogs. If you're not sure, and you haven't yet been in class for the Meet & Greet session, use a leave it or food lure to pass by these challenges. If you've attended the Meet & Greet session and feel ready, review your Meet & Greet homework and go for it.

Step 4. Go on your outing. Actively scan the environment so you can respond proactively to challenges rather than reacting when the distraction is already too close.

## After you get home.

Assess how the outing went.

- What did your dog do well?
- What needs extra practice?
- Is there anything you want to do differently next time?



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**Training Tip:**

Work at your dog's level. Is your dog ready to do a sit to greet a stranger? Has your dog spied a McDonalds's bag on the ground? A leave it from several feet away is more likely to work than when he has his nose on the wrapper.

**Troubleshooting:**

If your outing was not as enjoyable or successful as you would like, spend some time at home working on the commands your dog struggled with. Then pick an easier outing, such as going to the same park at a less busy time, taking a simple walk around the neighborhood, or even practicing in the back yard. Bring tastier treats and go before your dog's mealtime, not after.