Dog Walking Checklist

A dog walking checklist for owners covering gear, route, weather, etiquette and cleanup.

Gear and supplies

- [ ] Fit a comfortable collar or harness that will not slip.
- [ ] Use a sturdy leash suited to your dog and route.
- [ ] Confirm ID tags and microchip details are up to date.
- [ ] Pack enough waste bags for the walk.
- [ ] Bring water and a collapsible bowl on warm or long walks.
- [ ] Carry a few treats for training and recall.

Plan the route

- [ ] Choose a route that matches your dog's fitness and age.
- [ ] Pick quieter paths if your dog is nervous or in training.
- [ ] Note shade and water stops on longer walks.
- [ ] Avoid areas with known hazards or aggressive dogs.
- [ ] Vary routes for enrichment and new sniffing spots.
- [ ] Tell someone your route if walking somewhere remote.

Check the weather

- [ ] Check the forecast and temperature before heading out.
- [ ] Walk in cooler hours on hot days to protect paws.
- [ ] Test the pavement with your hand for excess heat.
- [ ] Add a coat for cold-sensitive dogs in winter.
- [ ] Wipe paws after walks on salted or icy ground.
- [ ] Shorten or skip walks in extreme heat or cold.
  Ask your veterinarian about safe exercise in extreme weather.

On-walk etiquette

- [ ] Keep your dog leashed where required by local rules.
- [ ] Give space to other dogs, people and cyclists.
- [ ] Ask before allowing your dog to greet others.
- [ ] Keep your dog off private lawns and gardens.
- [ ] Reward loose-leash walking and check-ins.
- [ ] Stay aware of traffic and hazards along the way.

Cleanup

- [ ] Pick up waste promptly with a bag.
- [ ] Tie bags securely to avoid leaks.
- [ ] Dispose of waste in an appropriate bin.

- [ ] Carry extra bags in case of a second stop.
- [ ] Use hand sanitizer or wash up after the walk.
- [ ] Keep public spaces and trails clean for everyone.

After the walk

- [ ] Offer water and let your dog cool down and rest.
- [ ] Check paws for cuts, debris, burrs or salt.
- [ ] Look over the coat for ticks after grassy walks.
- [ ] Wipe down muddy or wet fur as needed.
- [ ] Watch for limping, excessive panting or fatigue.
- [ ] Important: This is general information, not professional advice. Consult your veterinarian about safe exercise and a professional trainer for leash or reactivity issues.