

STATION #3 - CRUTCHES, CANE & WALKER

Crutches, canes and walkers should be introduced to your dog in a slow meaningful way.

- 1) First, have the crutches and/or folded walker laying on the floor. Encourage your dog to smell them. Give your dog treats so they get a positive association.
- 2) Next, have someone hold the walker or crutches in place, as if they are going to use them, but do not move them yet. Continue to encourage smelling the items and give treats. If your dog appears nervous, stay on this step until they are no longer nervous.
- 3) Next, have the person move/use the item in a slow, non-threatening manner. If the dog startles, stop moving the item. If the dog does not startle, keep your dog still at your side while walker moves around behind your dog. They should move out of the way, but not appear nervous. If they become nervous at all, stop moving the item momentarily.
- 4) Lastly, try to touch the item against the dog. They can move away if they wish, but they should not do so in a startled or scared manner. Some dogs will allow the item to touch them and others will not allow it. Don't force them to accept the item touching them.

Praise and reward your dog.

VISITS WITH CRUTCHES, CANE & WALKER

- I - **Introduce** yourself and your dog from a 2 or 3 foot distance from the person. State your purpose for being there.
- A - **Ask** if they would like a visit. If they answer 'Yes', ask if they prefer one side or the other.
- B - Once they respond, check if their walker has **brakes**. If so, ask that they set the brake.
- L - Move fairly quickly to the **location** they specified. People tend to believe they are not a fall risk. They will reach over or around the item to try and pet your dog before you are ready. If your dog is larger, position them closely to the persons side so bending is minimized. If your dog is smaller, it would be best to pick up your dog so the person does not need to bend down, increasing the chance they might fall.
- E - **Engage** in conversation

WRAPPING UP

- C - **Cards** and stickers - Give them if you have them
- A - **AND...**
- P - **Purel.** Hand sanitizer should be offered BEFORE and AFTER each visit. Keep your dog healthy too.
- E - **Exit**

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KEY POINTS

*Always introduce new things to your dog slowly. Pushing them can create a negative reaction/memory.

*A fall can happen very quickly. Try to keep people who use these items from reaching or bending down. Keeping a bit of a distance, at first, will allow you to possibly prevent a fall. If a chair is immediately available, that might be the best way to visit.

*Visits like these are usually 10 minutes maximum. Have a few conversation starters ready. (Tell them about your dog, ask if they have any pets, etc.)