

**Dog Training by PJ**  
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## HIKING WITH YOUR DOG CAN BE FUN!

Hiking in Northern Nevada or anywhere with your dog can be an enjoyable experience for everyone using the trails, when we consider and practice trail etiquette. What is etiquette? Simply, etiquette is defined as a noun...“meaning conventional requirements as to social behavior, proprieties of conduct as established in any class or community or for any occasion.” I’m sure we all know the meaning of trail, but for fun, we will define it as “a marked or beaten path, as through woods or wilderness.” Combined as “trail etiquette,” it would be following the rules and socially acceptable ways to enjoy the woods, wilderness and trails.

As dog owners, we enjoy the pleasures and time spent with our dogs. Often we enjoy the outdoors with our energetic dog-hiking companion on trails found throughout Northern Nevada and California. However, it is important to remember not every hiker, biker, or equestrian rider using the same trails “adores” our dog. I know - it is hard to believe - not everyone finds our dog “irresistible” but it is the “cold-nosed” truth!

When you keep mind some simple trail etiquette rules, you and your dog will be good ambassadors for other dogs and their owners. We can be good ambassadors by setting a good example. Here are a few things to consider before setting out with your dog on that hiking trail.

### **First, should you take your dog?**

As much fun as you both have together in the outdoors, there are times when your dog would be much better off either at home or with a pet sitter. Should your destination be a National or State Park, dogs are not always allowed in these areas. Verify whether your dog is welcome on the trail you have chosen to hike and remember, some areas have inspection stations or check-in-booths and may require proof of rabies vaccines. It is important your dog is properly trained, not just obedience but for endurance and fitness too. Begin with small hikes and increase the distance for both you and your dog. Get your dog accustomed to carrying their pack if your dog will wear one. Be aware, not all dogs are suited for hiking;

consider your dog's breed, age, condition, and health before embarking on your hike.

### **What to bring for your dog?**

Okay, so your dog is in good shape, is well-behaved, and you're taking him to a dog-friendly area to hike, be sure you have proper identification on your dog's collar and a safe, sturdy leash. Remember, depending on where you hike, many trails do require dogs on a 6-foot leash. You may wish to consider a long lead (30-40 ft.) since it still allows your dog more freedom but gives you the ability to restraint them if you encounter unfriendly animals or people on the trail. Only if your dog has a "perfect recall" (come) should a dog be permitted "off leash" and you are not "breaking the rules" for the area you are hiking.

Don't allow your dog to "visit" with others you encounter on the trail, unless you have determined the encounter will be a positive encounter for everyone involved. It is your responsibility to keep your dog controlled at all times. If you come upon unknown dogs and their owners, have your dog return to you, leash them and determine, through a conversation, whether a "meet and greet" should be allowed. Not all dogs are friendly when on leashes; leashed dogs can sometimes "act differently" so be wary. Keep your dog safe first.

Do not allow your dog to chase wildlife, other dogs or other hikers and always closely supervise your dog around children you may encounter on the trail. Some wildlife, i.e, bears, skunks, deer, wild cats, coyotes and others could be deadly to your dog. Your dog's safety should be your primary concern when in the wilderness.

Like us, proper nutrition is important for maintaining your dog's energy level when being active. To avoid sickness, do not feed your dog right before you exercise or hike. Feed them afterward when they are rested. Bring plenty of water and a collapsible bowl for your dog to stay properly hydrated. Not all water sources are safe for dogs to drink, and drinking from ponds or streams isn't any better for your dog than it is for you. Keep in mind your dog can quickly overheat.

Consider dog boots if you are hiking in rough terrain, or hot dry surfaces since some dogs pads are not normally tough and can easily burn. Should you opt for no boots, make sure to check your dog's footpads often and don't take your dog where the pads can burn. If you are bringing your little dog, consider a wearable dog

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carrier to allow them to rest, however, if you have "conditioned" the little dog too, generally a conditioned dog can keep up your pace on the trail.

If you are near water or plan to swim, don't forget the life jacket for your dog if they need one. Of course, bring an extra towel for your dog to clean up should your dog become muddy or foul smelling. Naturally, bring a first aid kit and "poop bags" for easy clean up. Don't ever leave feces on or near a trail...be a responsible dog owner. Be aware of ticks and fleas and take precautionary measures to ensure your dog's safe hiking trip.

## **You and your dog's trail etiquette.**

- Keep your dog on the trail at all times.
- Make sure your dog is obedience trained in the basics and understands and responds to voice cues and "recalls perfectly" when distracted. If not, your dog should remain on a leash at all times.
- Don't allow your "socially, nice dog" to visit or greet others on the trail until it is determined to be safe for everyone.
- If your dog is reactive it should always be leashed.
- Dogs are allowed on the National Forest lands "as long as they are under control - which may mean a leash." Dogs are not allowed in National Parks.
- Don't allow your dog to chase wildlife or domestic livestock (horses, cows, sheep, etc) - you could be fined.
- Respect the trails - clean up your litter and protect the trail environment; do not remove things that belong on the trail or blaze new trails.
- Share the trails, cyclists yield to all other trail users and hikers and dogs yield to equestrians. Stay right on multi-use trail segments.
- On crowded trails, proceed single file and use your dog's leash.
- Be aware and of narrow or winding trails only pass when you can clearly see the trail and traffic approaching from the opposite direction.
- Animals may act unexpectedly. If you are unsure about approaching someone with a horse or dog, ask the handler for guidance.
- You and your dog could encounter bears, deer, wild cats, coyotes, rattlesnakes, skunks, and other "wildlife" - be prepared and safe.
- Never let your pet eliminate on the trail. Should an accident happen, be prepared to move the mess off of the trail. The most responsible way to

deal with your dog's solid waste is the same way you would deal with yours - bury it or carry it out.

- Keep your dog under control and in your line of sight...other hikers, bikers or equestrians may "surprise you and your dog." This surprise encounter could be dangerous for the other biker or equestrian as well as a safety hazard for your dog too.

**Must haves before you hit the trail.**

- Insect repellent for both you and your dog, think fleas & ticks, biting insects, mosquitoes
- First aid kit for yourself and your dog (additional items for dogs might include tweezers or pliers for removing thorns or porcupine quills, a sock in case a paw is injured, adhesive tape)
- Water for both of you
- Collar with ID tags and leash
- Comfy clothes (extra sweaters etc.) and "cool coat for the dog"
- Hiking Boots and dog boots (if you wish)
- Food for both of you
- Power Snacks for both of you
- Extra leash and collar (just in case)
- Direct Stop - a citronella deterrent spray
- Poop bags or trash bags
- Cell Phone (in case of emergencies)

**A fun book to consider:**

**Hiking Nevada, 2nd: A Guide to Nevada's Greatest Hiking Adventures (State Hiking Series) (Paperback)** by Bruce Grubbs (Author) This book lists some nice hikes throughout the state ranging from short day hikes to multi-day backpack trips. Directions to trailheads, route descriptions, hypsometric maps (where appropriate) and such useful information as "canine compatibility" (ie. where you can walk with your dog) are all more than adequate.

**More on hiking trail etiquette:**

<http://www.toddshikingguide.com/Etiquette/Etiquette.htm>

**Happy trails to you and your dog; keep it safe and enjoy!**