



BLOG REPRINT

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Tellington TTouch® and the Athletic Dog: Dressing for Success



We make a great connection with a double-clip "Amazing Versatile Leash" by Mountain Dog attached to a "Freedom" harness by 2 Hounds Design.
Photo: Faith Barton

Guest Blog: Marnie Montgomery from Joyful Dog, LLC.

The equipment you use with your dog has the potential to enhance or hinder balance and communication. You'll want to choose gear that enables your dog to move freely while maintaining the body awareness, confidence and connection built through the touches and groundwork described in my first two blogs – Building Body Awareness and Creating Confidence in Connection.

This final TTouch® blog looks at body wraps, harnesses and leads. Get your dog race-ready by dressing for success!

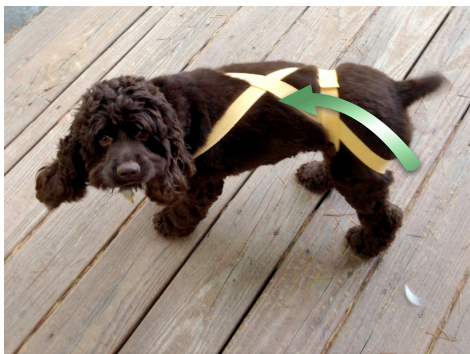


A basic Half Wrap.
Photo: Faith Barton

Wraps

A simple elastic bandage calls attention to body parts that are underused, or which may be favored due to injury, or the memory of past injury. Contact with the wrap combined with its elastic properties, build body awareness.

In addition, TTouch wraps have the potential to calm an anxious dog, in the same way that swaddling quiets an infant.



This wrap engages the hindquarters.
Photo: Marnie Montgomery

I often introduce dogs to wearing wraps using the Half Wrap, a basic configuration that centers on the chest, crosses over the back and loops around the torso. The wrap is not bandage tight but more like a leotard or snug t-shirt.

The needs of the dog determine the best wrap configuration. We might design a wrap to engage a dog's hind-quarters if weak from injury or underuse, or even put scrunchies on ankles to enhance awareness of foot placement.



Freeing the legs and shoulders with an "Urban Trail" harness by [Alpine Outfitters](#).
Photo: Marnie Montgomery

Harness

Pressure on the neck from a tight leash or a collar can harm delicate organs in the throat, such as the thyroid and larynx. It can increase intra-ocular pressure and cortisol levels and interfere with your dog's body language, hindering the subtle exchange

of signals between dogs. At Joyful Dog, we prefer harnesses, especially for canine athletes. A well-fitted harness that doesn't impinge on shoulder joints is ideal.



Making the connection with a double-clip TTouch leash attached to a “Balance” harness.

Photo: Marnie Montgomery

Leads

Many people like “flexi” leads because of their adjustable length and the way the spring tension takes up slack when the leash is not locked. The problem with these is the constant pressure from the spring actually encourages our dogs to pull, and the clunky handle and constantly changing length eliminates any meaningful communication with our dogs.

A traditional 6-foot leash offers a more nuanced connection. Creating two points of contact with a

double-clip leash on a harness, or a TTouch Balance Leash configuration looped lightly across the chest, provides even more communication between dog and handler.



A leash looped lightly across the chest, in the configuration called the Balance Leash.

Note how easily the dog holds her weight over her legs and paws.

In addition, she is in a half wrap, and is wearing “Scrunchies” to engage the hind paws.

Photo: Diane Taub

Race Day!

The Glow Dog Glow 5K is approaching fast! You will want your dog to feel as free as possible while you guys are running. As you warm up, you may want to consider using a wrap to help remind him to keep a well-balanced gait. It might also be helpful to devote some moments with a Balance Leash or thoughtful harness configuration to help Fido distribute weight evenly over all four paws. These



A step-in style harness with leash attached at two points removes pressure completely from the throat, and allows for easy movement.
Photo: Faith Barton

steps can help to establish a strong connection and lead you to the finish line!

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