

Dog Leash

The leash shown in this tutorial will be strong enough for small to medium dogs. If you plan on making leashes for larger dogs (like dobermans or great danes), you should do an eight-plait braid as a minimum.

You will need the following tools:

- Leather lace
- Core (can be round leather or paracord)
- Snap
- Waxed thread
- Sharp scissors
- Xacto knife
- Lacing fid
- Lacing needles
- Leather conditioner
- Rubber or rawhide mallet
- A hard surface

This is going to be a four-plait braid. Since we will be passing the lace through the snap loop to start braiding, we will need to cut only two strands of lace.

Start by measuring the length of the leash you want to make, including the wrist loop (don't forget to go around the loop as you measure). Multiply this length by 2 (the lace will be folded in two), then multiply it again by 1.5 (this is to account for the wrap around the core while braiding). To the result, add 6" (this is just to ensure we still have something to grab and work with when we get towards the end.

Example: If the total length you measured (including the wrist loop) is 48", multiplying by 2 will give 96", then multiplying that by 1.5 will give 144", and then adding 6" will give 150". So you would have to cut two lengths of 126".

The trick to getting a straight pattern is to keep an even tension on the strands as you braid. Not obvious if you're new to braiding, but don't worry, it'll come with practice.



Fig. 1 - You can use the lace as is (the one on the left) or bevel it for a more professional look (the one on the right).



Fig. 2 - To make things easier, attach one end of the core to the snap you want to use. (didn't have a snap so I used a keyring)



Fig. 3 - Whatever core you use, make sure to cut the other end at an angle. This will reduce the bulk when you tie it to form the wrist loop. If you use paracord, be sure to seal the end by heating it.

Dog Leash (cont'd)



Fig. 4 - Form the wrist loop and tie it with waxed thread. I find waxed thread is the best for this because it is somewhat sticky and won't slip. Be sure to wrap it as tight as you can. For instructions on how to do this knot, you can download this PDF I found on the web:
<http://www.ropeworks.biz/reader/whipping.pdf>
I use Method #2, but any of those will do.



Fig. 5 - Before I start braiding, I like to put some leather conditioner on the lace. I use Dr. Jackson's Hide Rejuvenator but there are other conditioners that will work just as well.

Pass the two strands through the hardware loop and find the middle point of each strand. This will give you four strands to braid with. Now cross them over like in the picture.



Fig. 6 - Take the back strand on the left and bring it over the front left strand.



Fig. 7 - Now take the back strand on the right and bring it under the first strand it meets and over the following strand.



Fig. 8 - Take the top strand on the right, wrap it around the back, then weave it between the two strands on the left, going under the top one and over the bottom one. Don't worry about the pattern at the back, it will create itself as you braid. If your pattern is even at the front, so will it be at the back.



Fig. 9 - Same thing, but with the top strand from the left this time. Wrap it around the back, then weave it under and over the two strands on the right.

Fig. 8 & 9 are what you will be repeating to create the braid. Keep going with this until you get to where you tied the wrist loop.

Dog Leash (cont'd)



Fig. 10 - Here we are at the wrist loop tie. Keep braiding until you've covered it.



Fig. 11 - Keep a close eye on the moment where you will have gone just over the wrist loop tie. At that point, when braiding with the strand from the left, bring it through the loop as you braid it. Once you've done this, keep braiding around the wrist loop. Once you have gone all the way around, take a piece of waxed thread and tie it around your braid. This will keep the braid from undoing itself as you leave it for the next step.



Fig. 12 - Now we need to prepare the ends of our strands for the lacing needles. First, skive the ends and cut them in an arrow shape.



Fig. 13 - Then put a needle on each strand. Be sure to close the needles on the lace by tapping them with the mallet, else you'll be pulling the needles and the lace won't follow.



Fig. 14 - Now, for this part, you'll have to study the braid and see where each strand should go. Basically, you want to double over the previously braided part. Use the lacing fid to open up the space where you want to go. This makes it a little easier to pass the needle and lace through.



Fig. 15 - Here's the lace before fully pulling it through.

Dog Leash (cont'd)



Fig. 16 - And now it is pulled.

Fig. 17 through 26 show the same process for the other strands.



Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Fig. 20



Fig. 21

Dog Leash (cont'd)



Fig. 22



Fig. 23



Fig. 24



Fig. 25



Fig. 26



Fig. 27 - Repeat the process twice for each strand. Here we have the end result.

Dog Leash (cont'd)



Fig. 28 - Before cutting the strands off, put your work on a hard surface and gently tap it with the mallet. This will help the lace to settle in place.



Fig. 29 - Next, using the heel of your hand, put pressure and roll the braid. Do this on the whole length of the leash. This will give the braid a more even finish. Here I used my hand, but if you want to take things a step further, you can use a flat piece of wood to do the rolling. This way you'll be able to put more pressure and the braid will come out even nicer.



Fig. 30 - Now that the lace has settled in place, it's time to cut the loose ends. I use cuticle cutters for this since they allow me to get in real close to make the cut. However, be careful not to cut the braided lace. Put the cutters in place, pull on the loose end and cut. Pulling on the lace before cutting is to ensure that when the lace retracts, it "hides" under the braiding.



Fig. 31 - Here is the final product. Now, some of you might be wondering how come this leash is so short. Well, it didn't really need to be that long for the instructions, right? ;)

Hope you've found this helpful. Have fun and enjoy braiding leashes for your furry friends! ;)