

PIGGY HARNESS TRAINING



H-Style Harness

Training your pig to walk with you on a leash and harness makes your life as his caregiver easier as well as allowing your pig to be safer and a closer part of your family. A leash-trained pig will be easier to take with you on family outings, summer walks, and certainly to the vet.

Pigs that have already bonded to you or the family typically don't have any trouble with harness-training. If your pig doesn't trust you, he needs to be better socialized before harness-training.

Some key pointers to keep in mind...Pigs are prey animals and, as such, do not like to be restrained; it is very threatening to them. Care needs to be taken not to force your pig into a harness. Once they become scared of an object, it is very hard to relieve them of that fear. Their intelligence usually makes training them easier,

but it can also hinder progress if they continually feel threatened. They don't forget much.

To keep them from feeling scared, don't immediately try to put the harness on the pig. Let them play with the harness first for a day or so, to let them realize that the harness itself offers nothing of which to be afraid. When putting the harness on for the first time, it can be useful to distract him by putting treats on the ground. Although he will still be aware of what you are doing, his mind will be focusing on the treats rather than this new activity. If the pig fights, reassure the him that everything is OK and try again. Move slowly and speak softly and do not force this first experience. Once the harness is on your pig, let him run around for a few minutes. Do this a couple times a day at first, increasing the amount of time you leave the harness on the pig. You do not want the harness to be tight (they will feel restrained) nor too loose (they may get caught in objects or even slip out of the harness).

Once he is used to you putting the harness on and taking it off, you can add the leash to your routine. This shouldn't be as stressful, but we would recommend you let him play with the leash like you did with the harness and allow him to spend time running around without any resistance (being careful to not allow the leash to get wrapped around any objects that might scare or trap him).

Once your pig is used to the harness and leash, you can again get out your treats and apply a little pressure to the leash. Call his name and provide a little force. Once he looks your direction or takes a step towards you, give him a treat. It's important that they learn to look at you for guidance when they feel pressure on the leash. Continue this practice for short periods so it doesn't seem like a chore. Once they understand that pressure means "look at you," start to teach him to walk with you at your pace. Go slowly at first. What you want to teach is that you want him to stay close to you. Walk slowly and when he catches up, give him treats and abundant praise. Don't scold him for not following. Always provide praise and treats for staying close to you. If you attempt any of this by forcing the pig (pulling him along, jerking him with the lead, etc.), you can pretty much forget about having a pig that is well-trained with a harness. Remember, they learn and respond quickly by you using treats, gentleness and compassion. Once a pig is harness-trained, he is harness-trained for life. Pigs never forget.

You should use harnesses that are especially made for potbellied pigs. Dog harnesses generally are not secure enough to hold a pig. There are two different styles - A & H. The "A" style slips on over the pigs



A-Style Harness

head and snaps behind the front legs or girth. The "H" style has two snaps; one that snaps around the neck one that snaps around the girth. Either will fit the pig securely and comfortably. Be sure to measure your pig with a flexible tape measure or a piece of string before ordering. You will need to measure your pig around its girth, right behind the front legs and up over his shoulder, and around the neck in front of the front legs. Always use the largest measurement. Piggy harnesses are adjustable (neck and girth).

Piggy Harnesses are difficult to find in local stores. Online orders can be placed at:

<http://www.pigs4ever.com>

<http://www.potbellypigs.com>

<http://www.rossmillfarm.com>