

A STARBUCKS DOG

Many dog owners want to be able to take their dog everywhere. The appropriateness of this is up for debate. Many places no longer allow dogs due to past dog owners' behavior and their lack of responsibility for their dog's behavior and/or cleanliness.

Training your dog to behave properly in places where it is welcome allows your dog to be better socialized, spend more time with you, and have more fun.

Start by training your dog to "down," "stay," and/or "place," so he will not be underfoot in public places. Once he has the skill at home, move it outside: stop during your dog walk and sit on a park bench or at a bus stop for a few moments, having him "down" and "stay" while you sit. Relax if you can and let the leash go a little slack. If you cannot relax, neither can your dog.

As he becomes more comfortable with this behavior, move to a place with more people: a park bench near a playground or outdoor seating at a shopping center. You do not need to stay a long time. If he does well, leave before he gets bored or over-stimulated.

People may ask to pet your dog, or may reach out to pet him without asking! Be aware of what is happening around you and your dog, and control the environment as much as you can. Again, if it is too much for you or your dog to handle, it is time to go. If he likes to be petted and is comfortable with strangers, let them pet him momentarily.

Try different places with different amounts of activity. Work up to a coffee date with a friend who loves your dog. Your dog needs to understand that he will not always be the focus of all your attention, and still needs to behave. Adding food and drinks to the situation can be distracting for many dogs. Ensure you can escape if necessary.

Lazy Dog restaurant has several Bay Area locations. They have large patios where dogs are welcome to dine with their people. They have rules regarding dogs and dog owners' behavior, and they are adamant about them. I've been on the patio at a Lazy Dog where almost every table has a dog with it. It has an exciting atmosphere.

If this is one of your goals with your dog, teach them to "down," "stay," and "leave it," practice in different places, upping the level of distraction when possible. Be aware of your surroundings and other people's behavior around your dog. Control the environment so your dog feels safe. ALWAYS be able to leave if necessary for the safety of your dog. Then have fun, show off what a cool dog you have, and enjoy being able to take him places with you.

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Bring Rover Over
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