



Why do we train our dogs to heel on our LEFT?

1. Tradition; Hunters carried their guns in their right hand. You don't want to shoot your dog. Also, when walking against traffic this puts your dog in a safe position, with you between him and the cars.

2. You have to pick one side or the other or at least that is how obedience has been trained. But with the introduction of Agility training, we began teaching our dogs both positions - left and right. However, you aren't in agility class. In class, having all dogs on the same side keeps dogs apart from one another, also the instructor can give you unconfusing directions on making a left and right turn, returning your dog to heel, you returning to heel and a few other things. So if the instructor had to stop and give you a different set of directions, every time she wanted the class to learn something new, the whole class would be confused.

3. If you want to teach a second position you can do it outside of class and with a separate set of commands. When you are walking your dog or working at home after graduation then teach both positions. To avoid you and your classmates confusion keep your dog on your left in class. One thing I tell my students who ask this question, "If your left hand isn't as strong, your right hand can do the work. You can hold your leash in your right hand. The treats get your dog to work in position, not a tight leash. If you reward the dog when he is in correct position and the leash just keeps him from running off you may find heeling on the left side works better."

But if this hasn't convinced you, have a private conversation before or after class with your instructor.

DOG IS SAFE
FROM TRAFFIC

DOG IS SEPARATED
FROM DOGS
IN CLASS

INSTRUCTION IS
LESS CONFUSING

MAKE THE
TRAINING DO THE
WORK NOT
THE LEASH.