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The Dangers of Retractable Leashes

Written on 06/03/2013 by [Brandy Arnold](#) in [Product Reviews](#), [Reviews](#)

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One of the most popular devices used to restrain dogs when taking them out for a walk is the retractable leash. Many owners, however, wonder if such a leash is appropriate or even safe to use. Well, the answer generally depends on a person's reason for using the device. While there are several ways to utilize the retractable leash properly, it is important to remember that they also pose some danger to you and your dog if not used correctly.



Before using a retractable leash, make certain you've got one that's strong enough to handle your dog. Dogs that have a tendency to bolt or take off running after perceived prey should never be restrained with a retractable leash. Aside from those dangers, there are other things to keep in mind when using one of these popular leashes.

What You Need to Watch Out For

- **Prickling leash burns.** Retractable leashes, especially the thin string variety, can very easily cause leash burns. This could happen when you let your pooch race past you with the retractable line zipped up across your bare skin. Unwarranted injuries, however, can be prevented if you try the flat, tape style retractable leash.
- **Entanglement or strangulation.** Not only can retractable leashes burn us, they can also get twisted around a dog's neck or legs. Worse, if your pooch panics and jerks the moment they get hog-tied; it could cause the leash to pull even tighter. Although you can loosen the cords that have wrapped around his neck, the situation could quickly become life-threatening.
- **Fatal accidents.** There are times when our dogs dart away all of a sudden, and with a retractable leash on him, your dog might dart even farther, faster. Nevertheless, it's the reeling that's a serious issue here. It is possible that Fido may spot a squirrel or anything interesting across the street, and suddenly take off after it. If you're not alert enough, his abrupt behavior and an un-sturdy retractable leash could put him smack on the road, right in front of a speeding car.

Other Things You Would Never Want to Happen

- **The leash drops.** Because these leashes rarely have a wrist strap and are sometimes heavy and bulky, dropping them is a regular occurrence. What's worse, if you drop the handle, the lack of tension can

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send the heavy handle hurdling toward your dog. Not only could the heavy leash handle smack your dog in the head, if your dog is spooked by the leash handle zipping deafeningly toward him, he may take off running.

- **The cord is grabbed.** If you grab the cord/tape while it is being pulled from the handle, you might suffer from immediate injury like cuts and burns.
- **The cord wraps around you.** Poor handling can also cause the cord/tape to twist around you or someone else's fingers resulting in deep wounds, or worse, amputation.
- **The collar breaks or comes off your dog.** The moment this occurs, the leash could retract at top speed while the other end of the line whips around at the same full momentum leading to serious injuries to face, teeth, and eyes.

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71 Responses to The Dangers of Retractable Leashes

Margaret Powell
December 19, 2012 | 4:13 pm

My brother was seriously injured and almost killed by a neighbors retractable leash. He was rining his bike downhill at night and at the shoulder of the road was a mother and daughter walking their dog with a retractable. The little dog was on the other side of the road and the leash line was invisible. When my brother rode by it caught above the front tire and flipped his bike. He did a face plant on the pavement and was unconscious and bleeding with a badly broken nose. An ambulance was called. It was very traumatic for all of us, and he didn't remember what happened for weeks. The ambulance bill and report finally came in the mail with no names of the mother and daughter. He is still trying to pay off the \$10,000. hospital bill.....



[Reply](#)

jesse
May 3, 2013 | 3:11 pm

A little dog weighed enough to flip that bike? What do you consider little? In the universe we live in as humans, i'm not sure that's possible. Unless your brother is 60lb's, his bike was made of air, and the dog was larger.



[Reply](#)

skloss
June 3, 2013 | 1:55 pm

Why are you doubting her story?? Her brother was severely injured, and it was the dog walker who was in the wrong! Walking on one side of the street while the dog walks on the other is stupid and dangerous! The cord CAUGHT the front tire-- THAT is what caused the flip.



[Reply](#)

KBK
June 3, 2013 | 4:06 pm

I don't think you understand the physics of a speeding bike, and something getting caught in the front wheel mechanism, bringing the bike to a dead halt. The rider continues to move, even though the bike has stopped. I have the scars to prove it and the culprit was a handbag strap.



[Reply](#)

Tammy Myers
June 3, 2013 | 6:56 pm

It was the leash line, not the dog, that caught his bike.