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EZ Leader

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Objectives

Collaboration between OT and ID partners to:

- Create an adaptive buckle with an easy side release making it more user friendly
- Enable client to safely participate and enjoy dog walking simultaneously
- Remain client centered

Client Story

K. is a 78-year-old living with scleroderma, arthritis, and vertigo. Recently, she has been to physical therapy to manage these symptoms which have begun to subside. Client expresses concerns of their limited hand use and risk of falls. Through our time with K., we found that she has challenges with dog walking, opening cans and jars, and meal preparation. K. has expressed that dog walking is the most meaningful occupation she participates in which is why we made it our center for the project.

Special Considerations

Dog walking is a co-occupation

- Environmental factors: busy streets & uneven walking surfaces

Client Factors

- Limited hand strength & mobility
- Presence of instability (vertigo)

Where We Started

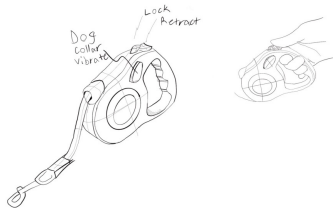


AIO Pack

All in One Pack: K. expressed that she has a lot of belongings to take with her on her walks with her dog, so we created this fanny pack so that she can have everything she needs in one convenient space while allowing her to walk her dog hands free.

EZ Educator

K's limited hand strength inhibits her ability to comfortably & easily press the control button on the Micro Educator, a training device she uses while walking her dog. The EZ Educator provides more accessibility to the button K. needs to press while enabling her to securely hold onto only one object.

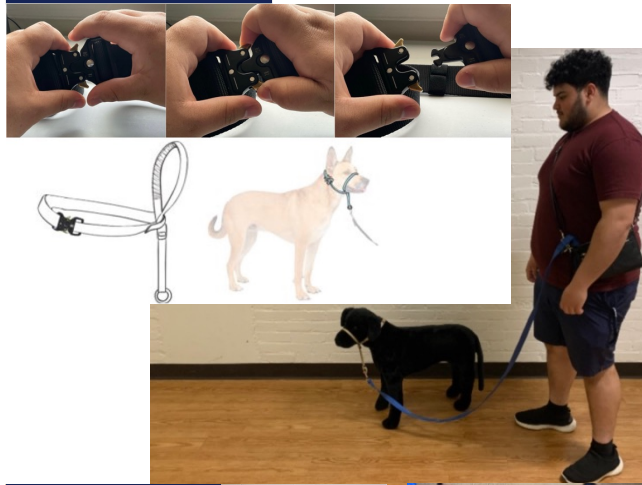


E-Z Leader

Focus: To modify the buckle for K. due to specific client factors

- Easy release buckle
- Incorporated K.'s preferred dog collar, the gentle leader
- Incorporated cross body bag with magnets to store items while moving
- Added adjustable Micro Educator to position where-ever K. Prefers it.

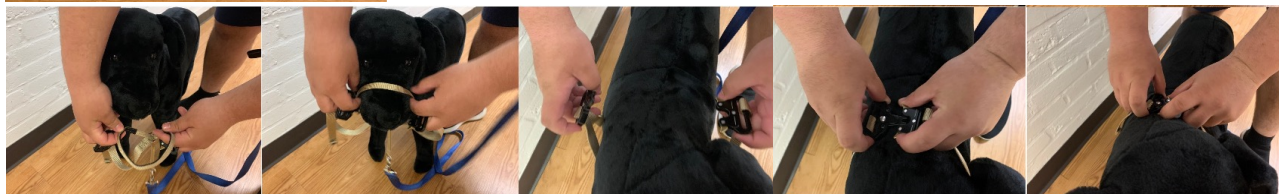
Quick Release Buckle



Cross Body Bag



Micro Educator



How Did We Get Here?

- **Phase 1:** AIO Pack that holds essentials like Micro Educator button, waste bags, keys, dog treats, wallet, and phone around waist for the walk to be hands-free
- **Phase 2:** Retractable leash with easy to reach Micro-Educator button increases accessibility for client to push button
 - Considerations: balance can be impacted and limited grip strength to grasp leash. What is the *main* focus for client
- **Phase 3, The Buckle:** Client's decreased strength and hand dexterity = difficulty with opening and closing buckle on gentle leader harness
- ***Solution:** Find an easy to use but secure buckle that the client can use
- ID Designer found the **Quick Release Buckle**, a larger buckle that is easier to manipulate and very sturdy.

Client Review Meeting March 23, 2023

- She demonstrated excitement with overall progress of ideas for the E.Z. Leader
- Quick release buckle was introduced to modify the gentle leader buckle due to K.'s limited grip strength & dexterity.
- She disclosed during the meeting that she avoids looping the leash around her wrist due to previous falls and holds leash with both hands for a better grip.
- She said she was interested in trying the "Chest Leash" since she has gotten stronger from therapy.
- She emphasized the need for accessible placement of the Micro Educator button in case of emergencies.

Function & ability to support client

K. expressed challenges opening and closing the buckle on her dog's gentle leader leash due to her arthritis. To address this issue, we developed the EZ Leader. This is a modified gentle leader leash that features a significantly larger and more manageable buckle compared to the regular buckle on the gentle leader leash. The EZ Leader is an ideal solution that offers greater ease and comfort for individuals with weak hand ability and strength to effortlessly and securely fasten their dog's leash.