

EXPERT JOURNAL / CAMPING & HIKING

Expert Review: Ruffwear FrontRange Harness

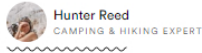
This review is my honest opinion of the harness, which I purchased with my own money in June of 2021.



BY [HUNTER REED](#)



My housemates dog wearing her Frontrange Harness which is what initially convinced me to buy one for my dog! All photos courtesy of Hunter Reed



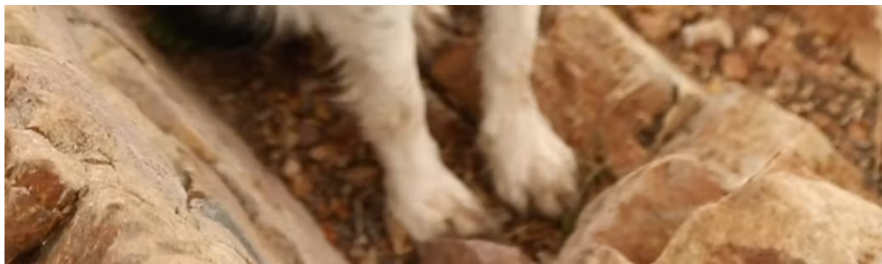
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About the Review: *This review is my honest opinion of the harness, which I purchased with my own money in June of 2021.*

My Take

The [Ruffwear Front Range Harness](#) is a great dog walking option that has been easy for me to use the past year, is comfortable for my 40-pound border collie to wear, and is safe for both of us. It is well-made with reinforced loops, high-quality buckles, and ripstop polyester, keeps my dog pleasantly contained, and if I have to tug her, I don't feel guilty.





Happy to be out hiking!

About the gear

- **Model:** 2021 Ruffwear Front Range Harness
- **Size:** M
- **Fit:** True to size

Test conditions

- **When I bought this:** June 2021
- **Days tested:** 300
- **Terrain:** Beaches, mountains, and deserts
- **Used for:** Day hiking, backpacking, trail running, and daily walks around the neighborhood
- **Where I've used it:** Utah desert, Utah mountains, California beaches, and Nevada mountains
- **Seasons I've used it in:** Spring, summer, fall, and winter

About my dog

- **Breed:** Border Collie
- **Weight:** 40 lbs
- **Age:** 5 years
- **Girth:** 70 cm

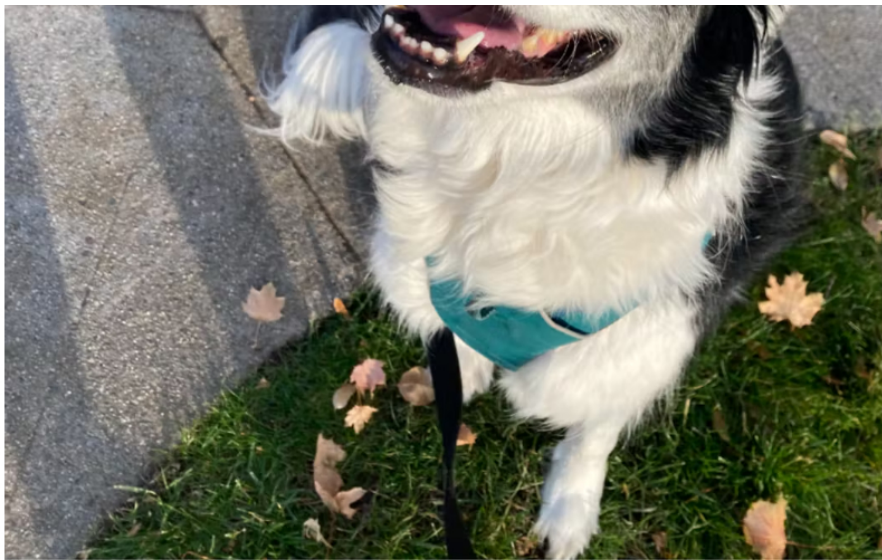
How it performs

Comfort	5/5 ★★★★★
Durability	5/5 ★★★★★
Ease of Use	5/5 ★★★★★
Release Reliability	5/5 ★★★★★
Versatility	5/5 ★★★★★
Weight	5/5 ★★★★★

What I was looking for

I was looking for a comfortable everyday walking harness that was pretty simple and compatible with year-round longer runs and [hikes with my dog](#). She is usually pretty good, and I'll have her off-leash a decent amount, but some days she pulls a lot or stops walking to sniff something. I felt like I was tugging at her [dog collar](#) a lot, and sometimes she would cough afterwards, so I was worried about her throat.





Wearing her harness on a neighborhood walk!

Why I chose this gear

This Front Range Harness was the second option I ordered for her. I first ordered a really lightweight, eco-friendly EcoBark harness to be more breathable for my black-coated Collie during Utah summers. However, it was so uncomfortable for her, she would walk oddly from the harness's shape that seemed to irritate her under her front legs, and the material didn't give me the leverage I was hoping for when I'd pull her. My housemate had the Ruffwear Front Range Harness for her 50-pound Shepard mix, and it was so easy to get on and off without her dog pulling with it when I'd walk her that I figured I'd give it a try.





Likes her harness but can't say she's a huge fan of wearing booties

What I love about it

- **Durability:** This harness is incredibly durable. It has a metal loop to put the leash through on the top of the harness on the dog's back and a reinforced loop on the front of the harness in case you have a dog that pulls a lot. I have used this front loop only on my housemate's dog, and it seems to help a lot with the pulling issue. Plus, the Front Range Harness is sturdy; I have utilized it for the past year without any signs of wear.
- **Comfort:** My dog doesn't seem to mind wearing this harness at all. She doesn't walk as if there are any hotspots or areas of discomfort. In fact, she is excited when I pull it out and lets me put it on her with no problem.
- **Fit:** Ruffwear has a convenient sizing chart that I used to find the right fit for my dog. I measured her girth as suggested (under their front legs a few inches back), which came out to be 70 cm. The size small went up to 69 cm, and the size medium was 69 cm and up. I was kind of on the fence, but she is pretty skinny overall, so I decided the medium would be a bit better in case she put any weight on in the future. I also knew it was pretty adjustable, so I could cinch it down if needed.
- **Material:** The part that touches the dog is fleece-lined, and the outside is a 300 denier ripstop polyester. It is really durable; she has wiggled through some tight rocky areas that I thought might rip the harness but had no issues whatsoever. It still looks brand new. The inside is a closed cell padding, which makes it a bit more structurally sound when the dog is pulling and seems to distribute the weight of their pulling a bit better than a thinner material might.
- **Ease of Use:** The Front Range harness is so easy to figure out. It has two buckles on the back of the harness and a clear aluminum ring for leash attachment. It is really clear from the design which way is up and down on this harness, so there is no real chance a person could use it incorrectly. It goes over the dog's head and clips under their legs in contrast to harnesses that require the dog to step in and out.
- **Versatility:** It is so versatile. I have used it all over for hiking, camping, fishing, and backpacking, and it works really well. It's also really adjustable. When watching a friend's 55-pound dog who is terrible to walk, since he pulls and is about 15 pounds bigger than my dog, I have upped the sizing for more manageability. It's nice that it doesn't take much effort to adjust it if I need to use it for another pup.
- **Reliability:** Both leash loops are really well-attached, and the buckles are really sturdy, so I have always felt like this harness is reliable. I don't think my Border Collie could get out of it if she tried, nor could any other more determined to escape dog (not even the friend's). It's also so easy to use that there's no way someone could misapply it and accidentally let their pup escape. Some harnesses are not intuitive at all, which leads to them being unsafe since they could easily be attached to the dog wrong. But that's not the case with this harness at all. I really think it's the safest one on the market.
- **Features:** There is a reflective trim around the outside of the harness, and while I don't walk a ton with my dog at night, it is nice to have in those instances as I know cars can see us a little better. It also makes it easier to see her if she is running around camp at night with her harness on.



Checking out some local wildlife

Issues I've encountered

- **Waterproofing:** It's not waterproof, and since it's a bit thicker, it stays wet for a long time. This has mostly only happened when she gets in the water on fishing days, which tend to be warmer days, so I think it actually ends up keeping her cool. But it does take a long time to dry, so, in colder climates and seasons, this might make a pup too cold or irritated to have a wet harness rubbing against them.



From my favorite moment with the gear in Big Sur, California!

Favorite moment with this gear

My favorite moment with this harness was on a surfing trip to California with my partner and dog (photo above). My dog doesn't pull a ton generally unless she sees something she really loves or hates.

And boy did she hate surfing.

I was holding her leash on the beach while my partner went out to catch a few waves, and she was so worried. She was trying to run after him and herd him back to shore with a determination I have never seen. Eventually, when he got out far enough, she resorted to sitting down and whining anxiously. It was kind of sad but also really cute that she was so worked up about him getting in the ocean. I had her Front Range Harness on and was so glad I did because it helped me keep her safe on the shore with me without requiring that I pull on her collar. Had she been wearing a collar at this time, I think she would have nearly choked herself because she wanted to go after him so badly. Yet, with the leverage this harness offered, I was able to keep her there without any discomfort to her! She was so excited when he came back in and repeatedly jumped in the air with all four legs off the ground. Meanwhile, I was equally as numbed that the harness displayed a safe performance just as well.


signs on the ground (meaning) I was equally as pumped that the harness displayed a great performance just as well.

Value for the money vs. other options

At first, I thought \$50 was a lot to spend on a dog harness, but Ruffwear makes really awesome products, and this is a fantastic harness. The EcoBark harness I had ordered was closer to \$30, but it didn't seem nearly as durable. My dog is not a runner and doesn't try to get away, but if she were, I wouldn't have been comfortable using the other harness at all because it seems like it could have easily ripped, or a dog could have gotten out of it if they pulled hard enough. I didn't explore a ton of other options after my first mishap because I was set on getting something that would absolutely work and last long. All in all, \$50 was nothing to spend for the quality and versatility of this harness. I use it just about every day, and it still doesn't show any signs of wear or in need of replacement.

Final verdict

The Ruffwear Front Range Harness is a great, safe, and useful option for any dog owner looking to have an easier time walking their pup. It is really versatile and has helped my dog stop pulling so much on leashed walks. When she does pull, I don't feel nearly as bad tugging her along compared to if I was just yanking at her collar around her neck. It's super simple to use and foolproof, so there's no real way someone can attach it wrong and risk their dog getting loose. Most importantly, my dog seems not to mind wearing it and gets excited to go on an adventure when I pull it out.

RUFFWEAR
Ruffwear Front Range Harness
\$39.95 [View Details](#)

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WRITTEN BY



Hunter Reed
CAMPING & HIKING EXPERT

Growing up in Utah makes it hard to not fall in love with camping and hiking! Lucky for me my parents got me out at a young age and I've been enjoying trails and campsites all across the west since I was little girl! There's just something special about making some dinner over a fire and going to sl...

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Hunter R.
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Jessica LaPolla
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★★★★★ (3,788)

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