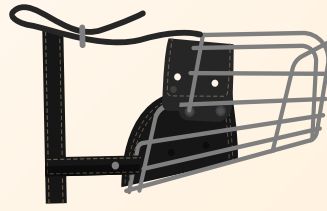


How to muzzle train **Your Dog**



Choosing your muzzle



- Muzzles should be a basket-type design
- They should be large enough to allow a full pant
- The nose should not be touching the end
- Ensure it does not ride up to the eyes
- Allow enough space for any facial folds etc
- The exact style will depend on the head/face shape
- Ensure the material is sturdy enough to provide effective protection from bites

What are muzzles for?



- Reducing the risk of injury to other people and animals. Including but not limited to:
 - Predatory behaviour
 - Dog aggression
 - Stranger aggression
 - Redirected aggression
 - Lead grabbing and ragging
 - Aggression at vets
- Limiting the ability to scavenge
- Increasing owner confidence
- Belt and braces for the worst-case scenario

What are muzzles NOT for?

- Removing the need to address underlying emotions causing risky behaviour.
- Physically stopping behaviours such as barking or chewing.
- Allowing dogs to be placed in high-stress situations (other than genuine emergencies).

Whilst wearing a muzzle your dog can...

- Drink
- Take treats
- Pant
- Vocalise
- Run around
- Have fun
- Sleep
- Relax
- Learn
- Express themselves



Before you begin....

- You can go ahead and purchase your muzzle. **DO NOT PUT IT ON YOUR DOG YET!**
- Select your dog's favourite treats, cut them up into small cubes, and keep them on hand ready to use.
- Start in a quiet place with no distractions.
- Schedule five minutes twice daily to spend training.
- If possible set up a camera to film your sessions so you can watch it back.



Step 1

- Hold the muzzle behind your back.
- Bring it in to view and immediately throw some tasty treats to your dog.
- As they finish the treats, remove the muzzle from view again.
- Repeat for a few minutes per session.
- Continue with this until they look happy or excited to see the muzzle.



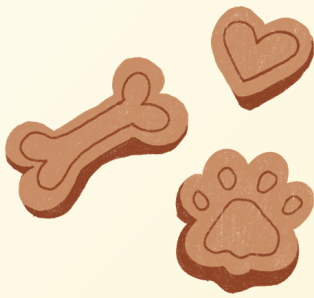
Step 2

- Let's develop a skill called targeting.
- This is essentially touching an object with the nose and it can be used in lots of ways.
- You will use this to get your dog to put their nose into the basket of the muzzle.
- Hold the muzzle still, do not lean towards your dog.
- Tap the muzzle and encourage your dog to investigate.
- As soon as they lean in or approach, praise them and give them a treat.



Step 2 cont.

- Continue to reward any approach of the muzzle.
- If they already know a touch cue, ask for this and reward them for touching the muzzle.
- Gradually start to delay delivery of the treat until they have positioned their nose into the end of the basket.
- Next step, you want them to reach in further. This is known as shaping the behaviour (rewarding progressive approximations of the final goal).
- They must put their nose in **BEFORE** you show or offer the treat.



Step 3



- Once your dog is reliably putting their nose all the way to the end before getting a treat, it is time to build duration.
- You want your dog to keep their nose in the muzzle for at least 5 seconds to give you time to do the straps.
- As your dog's nose reaches the end of the basket, pause for 1 second before giving the treat.
- Immediately follow it with another.
- The aim is to build your dog's ability to wait with their nose in position for their rewards.
- Take it really slowly, if your dog is struggling don't panic, just go back a stage.

Step 3 cont.

- Work slowly towards being able to get your dog to the muzzle, and put their nose in, wait a second, give 1 treat, wait 5 seconds, and give a second treat.
- Keep providing the treats through the bars at this stage to encourage them to keep their nose in place.
- If they try to move back or pull away give them space to do so.
- Provide breaks by asking for well-known, easier cues that they know how to do so.



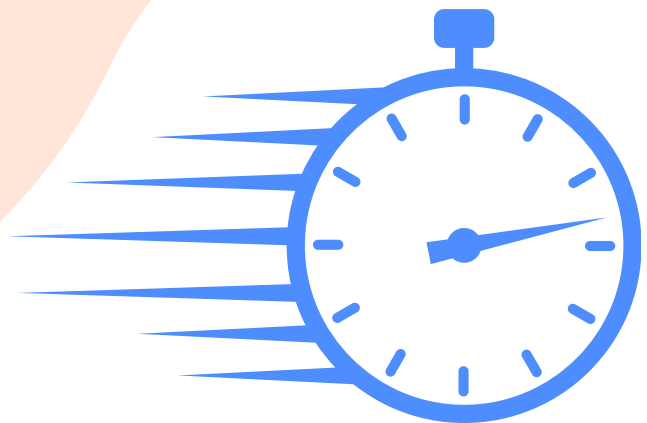
Step 4

- Time to add the straps and buckle up
- Do not rush this stage. It's a huge step and you may need to take a step back to stage 3 again, but don't be disheartened.
- Holding the muzzle in one hand, treat in the other, take hold of one of the straps. Release and treat again.
- Very slowly start to move the strap up the side of the head, behind the ear, and across to the other side and eventually to meet the other side of the clip.

Step 4 cont.

- If needed, give a few extra treats to buy you some extra time.
- Once you are able to do the clip-up, do not be tempted to leave the muzzle on!
- Practice clipping it up, treating and immediately removing it again for at least 3 sessions once you think you have success!
- Gradually start pausing before taking it off again.
- You may need to give treats every few seconds to start with.

Step 5



- When your dog is calm with the muzzle on for 30 seconds, you need to start to slow down the treat delivery.
- This is often easiest if they are distracted by doing something else at the same time.
- For example, ask them for a paw when they have their muzzle on and reward them for it.
- Practice short-distance recall, calling them back and forth between people and making a big fuss of them.
- Try to make it exciting, positive, and engaging.

Step 5 cont.

- Next, time to start practicing on the lead in the garden.
- Reward very frequently and practice for only a few minutes at a time. Once you have achieved this stage, it's time to go try going for an official walk.



Step 6

- Start practicing your muzzle training for short periods on walks.
- Allow your dog to sniff and explore to get used to the muzzle.
- Provide regular rewards through the bars of the muzzle and keep sessions short.
- Slowly prolong the interval between treats, and make gaps of varying length.
- Aim for a variable reward schedule as this encourages the most resistant behaviour
 - For example reward after 5 seconds then 2, then 5, then 7, then 10. Keep practicing until you can reward every few minutes, then every 5 and so on.

Having trouble?

- Your dog will not target the muzzle:
 - Go back to stage 1 and ensure they are comfortable seeing the muzzle.
 - Cup your hand under the basket and sprinkle some treats inside, or smear something sticky on the bars to encourage them to put their head in until they realise nothing bad is going to happen.



- Your dog starts pawing or battling the muzzle rather than targeting with their nose:
 - Try to slowly walk backward as you encourage them to put their nose in.
 - You might need a treat to guide them in the first few times.
 - If they have to walk to keep up with you, they will struggle to be pawing too.
 - Once they have started offering the behaviour we want, reward it heavily and after some practice, you should be able to do it standing still too.

Having trouble cont.

- Your dog starts chewing the muzzle:
 - You need to go back to stage 2 and ensure you are consistently rewarding them for the same behaviour.
 - Watch your videos back to check you are not rewarding at the wrong times etc.
 - If all looks ok, maybe it is time to move on and see how they cope with the next step.
 - If it is still not working, try doing it on the move.
- Your dog tries to paw the muzzle off:
 - Go back and work on duration before adding the straps back in.
 - Go through stage 4 again, do not be afraid to let them move away.
 - Once they are happy having the muzzle on, reward them with a constant stream of treats.
 - Keep it on for only 10 seconds or so at a time.
 - Very slowly increase duration and slow down treat delivery.
 - If they start trying to get it off, distract them. Once they have stopped pawing at it, remove it and give them a break.
- They won't put it on when we need it...
 - Slow down, if you are in a rush your dog will feel your tension.
 - You need to generalise behaviour, which means teaching your dog to do the behaviour in any location and with any person.
 - Start by doing muzzle training in different rooms, on walks, in the car etc.

Lastly...



- Have fun and enjoy the time with your furry friend.
- Be proud of what you have taught your pooch.

