



MUZZLE TRAINING

Why use a Muzzle?

Muzzles are used for many different reasons including:

1. Preventing injury to others (dogs and humans)
2. As a method to safely carry out a veterinary procedure
3. To carry out a first aid procedure (when an animal is in pain they can sometimes bite)
4. Some dogs on the dangerous dog list have to be muzzled in public places by law

It is essential to ensure the safety of other people and animals. If a muzzle is not introduced properly, and used only in situations that your dog associates with being fearful and aggressive, this can make your dog's aggression and fear behaviour worse. It is, therefore vital to introduce the muzzle to your dog correctly and in non stressful situations in order to avoid this.

I recommend a Baskerville type muzzle which allows your dog to pant and receive treats through the bars.



Introducing your dog to the muzzle should be done very slowly, so that your dog learns to accept it without any negative associations. Positive reinforcement is essential and this handout takes you through the procedure to ensure this is achieved.

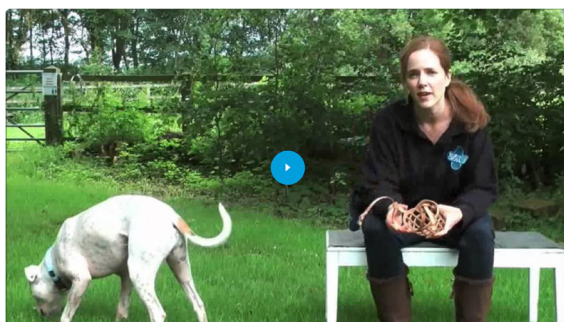
1. If your muzzle has a clip fastener, you should begin by clipping and un-clipping the fastener in the presence of your dog when he/she is relaxed. This should be done until the sound causes no reaction. To introduce your dog to the muzzle itself, place it close to your dog when they are sitting calmly with you or engaging in something pleasant.
2. When your dog has accepted its presence, choose a time when you and your dog are relaxed. Put treats inside the muzzle, holding it like a bowl. This will encourage them to put their nose in it without causing fear. You can smear cheese paste/ marmite in it for them to lick off too.
3. Once they are happily doing this, hold the muzzle as if you were going to place it over the dog's nose but let them lick off some cheese paste from the inside to encourage them to stick their nose in. Avoid pushing it over the muzzle – let them do it in their own time. Hold the muzzle very still so that he/she can retrieve the food easily. Repeat this exercise until the dog is happily placing his/her head into the muzzle. Make sure that your dog associates this action with lots of praise and affection.
4. When your dog is readily accepting the muzzle briefly being placed over his/her nose, you can fasten the muzzle briefly and then immediately unfasten and remove it. Again, your dog's acceptance of this should be associated with large amounts



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of praise and affection. The paste inside the muzzle will also help the dog to make positive associations. Other treats can also be used such as long cheese straws that can be fed through the bars. Gradually build up the amount of time that the muzzle is left on your dog until he/she is readily accepting its presence. Do not rush this step.

5. Each time you put the muzzle on your dog it helps to use a command such as 'muzzle time'. This helps them to predict the process without startling them. Try and vary the locations and circumstances during training to get them used to wearing it in different situations.
6. It is usual for a dog to try and paw at the muzzle during the early stages of training but persevere – having a lead, collar or harness in situ to keep them moving is recommended. This will help with control and break the habit. Make sure you praise your dog when they stop in order to teach them acceptance.
7. It always helps to see a demonstration of the training. For an audio-visual training video showing each step please [click here](#).



8. If you are experiencing problems with fear/ aggression, it is recommended that you get the help of a professionally qualified and experienced animal behaviourist who can prepare a safe and structured behaviour modification plan.

For specific help with a behaviour problem please contact me:



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