

Muzzle

Instruction Guide

Muzzling a dog is sometimes a necessity for the safety of both the dog and person. There are many instances where muzzling a dog is the safest route. Even though your dog might typically be friendly, he could react and potentially bite when he is in pain or feels stressed or fearful. Examples in which a muzzle can be a good option include:

- A dog with an injury who needs to see a veterinarian
- During nail trims and grooming
- For dogs who are reactive to other dogs or people

Muzzles are often not introduced until the dog is already stressed or having a fearful reaction. When you introduce a muzzle in this stressful encounter, the dog may associate the muzzle with the unpleasant experiences.

Teaching your dog to be comfortable with a muzzle before a stressful experience can be very beneficial. By associating the muzzle with pleasant things like treats and play, you can positively impact a potentially stressful encounter. Additionally, your dog will already be comfortable with the sensation of a muzzle, so this new experience won't add unnecessary anxiety to a situation that calls for its use.

These instructions will allow for the best and easiest use and fit of the muzzle.

Getting your dog accustomed to the muzzle

1. When you introduce your dog to the muzzle, have lots of tasty treats available. Pairing these two will teach your dog the muzzle predicts yummy food!
2. Show your dog the muzzle. Let your dog interact with the muzzle by looking at it or touching it, reward him with a treat and praise. Don't rush him, let the dog choose to approach the muzzle.
3. Open the muzzle so your dog can place his nose through the nose portion. Invite your dog to place his nose through the muzzle by holding a treat on the other side. Make sure your dog is doing this at his own pace. Forcing the muzzle on his nose will likely make him fearful or uncomfortable.
4. When your dog is excited to put his nose through the muzzle and get the treat, clip the neck strap closed. Continue rewarding your dog with treats and praise as he wears the muzzle. Keep the muzzle on for a few seconds.
5. Remove the muzzle and take away the treats. Then put the muzzle back on and give lots of treats and praise again. Do this several times and, as your dog feels comfortable, slowly increase the duration of how long you keep the muzzle on.
6. Practice this during short training sessions over several days. The more positive experiences your dog has with the muzzle the better! Add play while he is wearing the muzzle. This means your dog will be less stressed when he needs to be muzzled.

Keep training sessions short. During the training session, you'll want to give your dog lots of treats and praise while he is wearing the muzzle. When the muzzle is off, take away the treats and praise. You'll want to build the association that the muzzle means tasty and fun rewards!

Fitting & wearing the muzzle

- To fit the nose portion of the muzzle, begin with the muzzle fully open. Place the mesh panel under the dog's snout, then wrap the sides around and across the top of the dog's snout. Secure the Velcro® fastener so that the muzzle is snug enough that the dog cannot open their mouth entirely to bite. However, it should be loose enough so that the dog can open their mouth a little to pant.
- Wrap the neck strap behind the dog's head and clip the buckle. Adjust the strap length so you can fit only one finger underneath the neck strap. Your dog should not be able to remove the muzzle from their nose if the neck strap is clipped and properly adjusted.

CAUTION Your dog should be supervised at all times while wearing the muzzle. Do not leave the muzzle on your dog for more than 45 minutes at a time, and less time in hot weather.

CAUTION If you have a reactive dog or a dog with a bite history, please consider enlisting the help of a trainer, veterinarian or behaviorist.

Normal puppy chewing and nipping should be addressed with exercise, enrichment toys and training, as puppies need to chew at that stage of development.