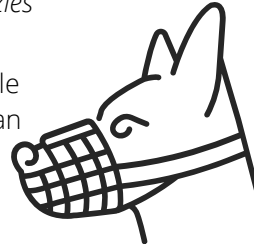




# MUZZLE TRAINING

*for the use of basket muzzles*



Like a bike helmet, a muzzle is a piece of safety equipment. A muzzle protects the dog as much as the people around them. Every dog can benefit from muzzle training, since any dog may need to wear a muzzle in the case of high stress or injury. Proper training makes it much less stressful (and maybe even pleasant) for a dog to wear a muzzle.

Our goal is to make sure your dog is comfortable with every step of the muzzle training process.

## STEP ONE

Show your dog the muzzle from a foot away; reward with food whenever they look at it. Do this 2-5 times. Gradually move closer to your dog until the muzzle is within touching distance.

**Tip:** If your dog retreats from the muzzle, start from farther away. Hold it at a distance where they can see it but doesn't try to move away. Toss the food while the muzzle is in view, then take the muzzle out of your dog's view (e.g., put it behind your back) and stop feeding treats. Show the muzzle again and start feeding, then take it away and stop feeding. Gradually move the muzzle closer until it is within touching distance.

## STEP TWO

Wipe some wet food, peanut butter or soft cheese around the inside edge of the muzzle. As your dog approaches, let them lick the muzzle. When your dog will comfortably approach the muzzle and touch it, go to Step 3.

## STEP THREE

Place high-value treats in the muzzle and allow your dog to eat the treats from the muzzle. Cup your hand under the muzzle to hold in the treats. Let your dog place their nose in the muzzle to get the treats. Slowly pull the muzzle away from the dog as they eat the treats, so that they want to follow and push their mouth into the muzzle. Do not force the muzzle on to your dog. Gently remove the muzzle before the dog has a chance to remove their nose from it. This step will ensure that the dog does not develop a habit of taking the food and pulling away from the muzzle. When your dog will keep their nose in the muzzle for 30 seconds, go to Step 4.

**Tip:** If treats fall out of the muzzle as you are working on this step, try putting some duct tape inside the bottom of the muzzle to hold them in.

## STEP FOUR

Gradually require the dog to keep their nose in the muzzle for longer periods. For this and all following steps, use treats that you can easily give the dog through the muzzle (like pup-peroni). Even better, use tasty foods with paste consistency, such as soft cheese or peanut butter, to squeeze rewards through the muzzle into the dog's mouth. When the dog will wear the muzzle for 2 to 3 minutes, go to Step 5



**Tip:** If your muzzle does not allow for easy delivery of treats to the dog's mouth, consider cutting out one small section of bars from the front.

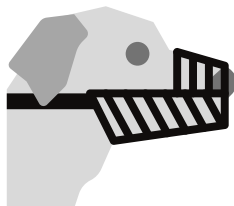
## STEP FIVE

Allow your dog to place their nose in the muzzle and reward with treats. Begin to fumble with the straps and clips, and attempt to touch the straps together. When you can hold the straps for 10 seconds without clipping them, go to Step 6.

## STEP SIX

Allow your dog to place their nose in the muzzle and reward with treats, then clip the muzzle straps around their neck. Make sure the muzzle is snug enough that they can't pull it off, but also not too tight. Give treats quickly and constantly for the entire time the muzzle is on. Keep the sessions short — 20 seconds to start. When you can easily place the muzzle on your dog, and clip it, go to Step 7.

**Tip:** If you notice that the muzzle seems to be chafing or looks uncomfortable, check to be sure that you are using the right size. If you are, then consider applying foam padding to the chafing points on the inside to make it more comfortable for the dog.



## STEP SEVEN

Put the muzzle on your dog and immediately begin to reward with treats while they are wearing it. Then, while they are wearing the muzzle, take your dog for a brief walk inside down a hallway. Keep giving treats frequently (every few steps). It's helpful to have two people to do this at first: one to keep the dog moving and one to reward. Do this exercise until your dog is comfortable and then go to Step 8.

## STEP EIGHT

Put the muzzle on your dog and immediately begin to reward with treats while they are wearing it. Take the dog for a short walk (outside, this time) while wearing the muzzle. Click and reward at regular intervals. Do not remove the muzzle until your dog is back in the house.

**Tip:** If your dog starts to paw at the muzzle, keep them moving and reward more often. Do not remove the muzzle while your dog is pawing at it. If they get very uncomfortable, wait until they stop pawing at it for a few seconds (feed treats to distract if necessary), and then remove the muzzle and end the session. In the next session, reduce the amount of time your dog wears the muzzle.

## STEP NINE

Have your dog wear the muzzle for all walks. Your dog should look forward to being muzzled at this point, because it predicts a walk. Give the treats frequently during walks.

