



TRAINING TIP: *Muzzle Training*

Simple Steps for Muzzle Training

WHY MUZZLE TRAIN?

- To keep **YOUR** dog safe!
- To **help** your dog gain needed space from others that they may be nervous of. (people and or dogs).
- To **keep** others safe.
- If your dog's breed **is** on or **were** to be added to the restricted breeds list.
- For **emergency** vet visits.
- For some **groomers**.
- For some general **vet** appointments.
- To **help** prevent scavenging.

Restricted Breeds must wear a muzzle in public places by law.

MUZZLES EXPLAINED

A muzzle can become your dog's friend and safety net, literally!

If a dog is trained to wear a muzzle they can be worn comfortably and give you as an owner confidence knowing that you are keeping your dog safe.

There are many types of muzzle so you need to ensure you get the correct fitting one and make sure it is comfortable and effective. We would usually recommend a basket type.

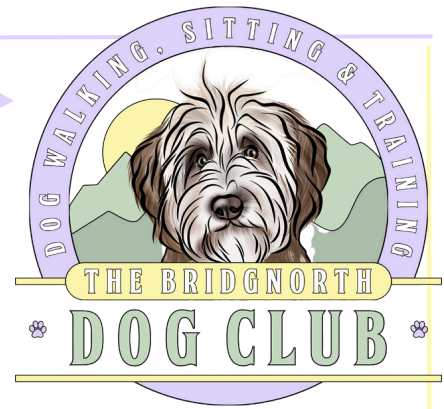
If you are worried your dog won't be able to breathe properly or drink freely, don't worry, if it's correctly fitting they can do all of these and even take treats when training!

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DOG TO WEAR ONE?

There are a few steps to this so the main thing to remember is to take your time and work gradually and **ONLY** at your dog's comfortable pace.

Only progress through the steps when your dog is comfortable with each one. If you move on too quickly you may have to start over and potentially change to a completely new muzzle.





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To ensure your dog is comfortable wearing a muzzle **DO NOT** rush any of the following steps.

Step One

Once you are sure you have a correct fitting muzzle you can begin training. For a day or so just have the muzzle lying around the house, so the dog knows it is in the environment but it has absolutely no meaning to them. You want the muzzle to just become background stuff, not scary, not exciting, just there!

Step Two

Once your dog is paying zero attention to the muzzle you can start making positive associations to it. Start with the muzzle behind your back or on a surface so your dog can't see it, then bring the muzzle into view and feed LOTS of treats just for the muzzle being in view. Don't say anything, don't force the muzzle towards your dog, don't say "What's this", just be pretty chilled so the dog starts to pair the muzzle being in view with the good stuff which creates a really nice positive association before we have even tried to put it anywhere near the dog. Do this for a couple of days in various locations.

MUZZLE IN VIEW = BUFFET TIME!!

Step Three

Hold the muzzle at your dog's nose height but **DO NOT** push the muzzle forward towards your dog. An easy way to prevent you from doing this is to sit on a chair or on the floor and rest your hand holding the muzzle on your knee to keep your hand "stationed" When your dog pays any attention to the muzzle, tell them they are brilliant, "good boy" "good girl" "good dog", "yes" or "good", (whichever your dog knows as meaning they have done something good and are going to get a treat). And give them a treat, but reward them close to the muzzle to keep creating that positive association.

If you have got to this stage you are doing brilliantly. Keep going!

For the next steps please ensure you are holding the muzzle firmly in the palm of your hand to prevent it from getting stuck on your dog's face ensuring the straps are tucked away to help with this. If necessary practice how best to hold it before you start training.

Quick Tip: practice doing the straps up over and over again without the muzzle being on your dog first so you don't become all fingers and thumbs while attempting later on as this could annoy your dog which could set you back.

If at any point you are struggling please ask your trainer for help before continuing.



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Step Four

Your dog may now be investigating the muzzle more and starting to feel comfortable enough to put their nose fully or partly into the muzzle. Once your dog seems comfortable putting their nose into the muzzle, (make sure you tell them they are doing great) and feed them through the front of the muzzle, you can use decent size pieces of food so it's easy to poke through the holes of the muzzle and your dog can easily take them using their lips or front teeth, you can use squeazy cheese or paste for this if you find it easier. You don't use crumbly or small pieces of food as this will become frustrating for your dog.

Step Five

Now we are at a point where you should see that any time you bring the muzzle out your dog is thinking good thoughts as it knows muzzle equals buffet time!!! This is when you should see your dog offering to keep its nose in the muzzle for longer periods, maybe a second or two. You can now start adding time/duration by extending the time between the nose in the muzzle and treating your dog, increasing the time slowly by a few seconds at a time. The more time you take building duration the better!

Step Six

NEARLY THERE, YOU ARE DOING GREAT! This is where you need to be a bit careful. Your dog should now be at the point where they are happy enough to keep their nose in the muzzle for 10 to 20 seconds between treats and showing zero signs of discomfort. While they have their face in the muzzle you can start gently moving the straps around and maybe resting them on top of their head. **DO NOT DO THEM UP YET!** You should see the dog being pretty much unfazed by this and keeping their nose in the muzzle, if they remain comfortable make sure you continue to reward through the muzzle to carry on the positive association. Build this up gradually until your dog is totally happy to place their nose into the muzzle whilst you do up the straps and they show no signs of stress. Feed them through the muzzle then take it off slowly and calmly. Repeat the process over and over until your dog is happy to keep the muzzle on and move freely around the environment without attempting to remove it themselves by rubbing their face on the ground or with their paws.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO HELP YOUR DOG BE COMFORTABLE AND SAFE