

## Making Muzzle Training Fun!

There are a lot of good reasons to muzzle train a dog:

- To prevent them from eating inappropriate items that could make them sick
- To prevent them from nipping when playing with other dogs
- To prevent them from biting when at the vets/groomers
- To keep people and other animals safe

The key steps to ensuring a dog loves their muzzle are:



### 1. Make it fun!

\*Always pair the muzzle with something the dog loves, like food, toys, playtime, and walks!

### 2. Go slow

\*Let the dog dictate the pace of training. If they show any signs of discomfort, go back to the previous step.

\*Only push ahead when the dog shows a happy response to the muzzle.

### 3. Get a Proper Fit

\*Make sure the dog can pant, drink water, and take treats while wearing the muzzle.

## Here's how you can teach a dog to love wearing a muzzle!

1. Put high valued treats at the bottom of the muzzle (you may have to cup your hands under it to prevent the treats from falling out), or smear peanut butter at the bottom of the muzzle.
2. Hold the muzzle down low and wait -the dog will smell the treats and come over to investigate on their own. Praise them for checking out the muzzle!
3. Allow the dog to put their nose in and eat the treats at their pace. Praise them while they are doing this!
4. When they are finished and remove their head, repeat steps 1 to 3 ten times.



5. Now, hold the muzzle down low without any treats inside and say “Muzzle up!”
6. When the dog puts their nose in Say “Yes!” and immediately offer them a treat **-their nose must still be inside the muzzle while they are eating the treat!**
7. Feed them several treats in a row so they get comfortable keeping their nose in the muzzle for several seconds at a time. If they want to take their nose out then let them, but do not give them a treat for this.
8. Repeat steps 5 to 7 ten times.
9. Now, holding the muzzle low, say “Muzzle up!” Once your dog puts their nose in, count to 2, then say “Yes!” and offer a treat. They must eat the treat while their nose is in the muzzle!
  - a. Repeat this step until your dog is not showing signs of removing their nose from the muzzle after two seconds.
  - b. Now say “Muzzle up!” and count to 3 before saying “Yes!” and giving a treat. Repeat as needed.
  - c. Continue step 9, gradually increasing the length of time the dog holds their nose in the muzzle before getting a treat. Once they can comfortably “wear” the muzzle for ten seconds, you can move on to the next step.
10. Time to start strapping the muzzle on. Repeat step 9, but while the dog is eating their treat, hold the straps behind their head -do not connect them yet. Let them go and allow the dog to remove their nose when they have finished eating the treat.
  - a. Gradually increase the length of time the dog keeps their nose in the muzzle while you hold the straps behind their head. Once you can do this for 5 seconds, move on to the next step.
11. Holding the muzzle low, say “Muzzle up!” Once your dog puts their nose in, gently connect the straps and offer your dog some more treats through the muzzle. Do this for 5-10 seconds, then remove the muzzle.
  - a. Gradually increase the length of time your dog has the muzzle strapped on. They should be doing something fun while wearing it, such as eating treats, or playing with you!
  - b. If your dog tries to paw the muzzle off, or rub their head against something, distract them so they stop. Only remove the muzzle when your dog is no longer trying to get it off.



Gradually increase the length of time your dog wears the muzzle, always ensuring they are having a good time while it's on!

## FAQs

**Q.** What if the dog already has a bad association with muzzles?

**A.** Simply start from step one, but with a different muzzle -use either a different type of muzzle or a different color. Some people wrap Baskerville muzzles in colorful duct tape to add a layer of cushion to make it more comfortable, as well as making it appear different to the dog.

**Q.** What type of muzzle should I use for long periods of time?

**A.** Plastic basket muzzles are a good option for long wear. A highly recommended brand is Baskerville Muzzle (pictured above). A Pro-Guard Softie Muzzle (pictured right) is also recommended for periods of long use, but these aren't as convenient for training because you can't feed the dog treats while they are wearing it.

