



Muzzle Training Guide

These training sessions should only be carried out when your dog is relaxed and, in an environment, where they feel comfortable. Each stage of this guide should be carried out until your dog feels 100% comfortable before moving onto the next. If your dog is avoidant of the muzzle, backs away, flinches or tries to paw at the muzzle at any point go back a stage

What you will require for this training;

- High value treats, preferably something spreadable and longer lasting like, primula cheese, pate, wet dog food.
- Appropriate fitting muzzle.

Stage 1 - Introducing the Muzzle

1.0	Present the muzzle to your dog - bring it into view (do not move it towards your dog) and when your dog acknowledges it (looks, sniffs, approaches), mark yes and reward with a treat. Repeat this action whilst your dog gets more comfortable and starts to show more interest.
1.1	Holding the muzzle still at nose height, pop a treat in the opening of the muzzle. If your dog takes the treat, mark and repeat.
1.2	Place a treat further down into the muzzle to lure your dog's nose all the way into the muzzle, as soon as they do, mark and repeat. If they take the treat and quickly retreat or seem hesitant in any way, go back a stage.
1.3	Introduce the 'Muzzle' cue - continuing stage 1.2 as your dog is getting more comfortable popping their nose in. Present the loaded muzzle to your dog and say "muzzle", mark yes and repeat. As you continue to do this, your dog will learn the cue "muzzle" means to pop their head into the muzzle
1.4	Once they are fully comfortable putting their head into the muzzle encourage them to remain with their head in the muzzle by drip feeding further treats into the spaces at the front of the muzzle.
1.5	Use a longer lasting paste for your dog to lick off at the base of the muzzle so they get used to holding their face in the muzzle for longer.



Stage 2 - Building Duration

Using the long lasting paste, load up the muzzle, present the muzzle to your dog and say 'muzzle', mark yes as your dog pops their head in and licks the paste. Just as they reach the end of the paste before they remove their head from the muzzle post a few treats in through the end of the muzzle.

Begin to count 1 second in between each treat posted

Once your dog is comfortable holding their head in the muzzle whilst continuously receiving treats every second for 30 seconds reduce the rate of reinforcement so that your dog receives a treat every 2 seconds.

Treat every 3 seconds

Treat every 4 seconds

Treat every 5 seconds

Treat every 6 seconds. At this stage you can introduce movement, try walking backwards as you treat your dog to encourage them to move with you.

Treat every 7 seconds (continue with movement)

Treat every 8 seconds (continue with movement)

Treat every 9 seconds (continue with movement)

Treat every 10 seconds. Once your dog is fully comfortable holding their head in the muzzle for a full 10 seconds between treats, move onto stage 3.



Stage 3 - Handling and Fastening

3.0	Before attempting to buckle or clip up the muzzle, help your dog get comfortable with the 'click' sound of the clip fastening. Fasten the clip a short distance from your dogs face, when you hear the click, reward your dog. Slowly reduce the distance so the dog can get comfortable hearing the noise up close.
3.1	Lure your dog's nose into the muzzle as before. Gently touch the undone straps and reward.
3.2	Gradually move one strap up behind your dogs head and reward.
3.3	Move both straps up behind your dogs head and reward - do not fasten them. It may take a few sessions to get to this point. If your dog attempts to back out of the muzzle or shows to be uncomfortable at any point go back a stage.
3.4	Fasten the straps behind your dogs head then instantly unclip and remove it from their face. This stage can be fiddly so you may find it easier to place the loaded muzzle between your knees to free up your hands.
3.5	Fasten the strap for 2 seconds, reward and then remove the muzzle.

Stage 4 - Building Duration and Introducing Movement

4.0	Gradually work up to your dog being comfortable with the straps fastened for 10 seconds and then reward. You may find it best to distract attention away from the muzzle by encouraging them to walk or run with you or by engaging them in their basic training.
4.1	Work up to your dog wearing their muzzle for 30 seconds before rewarding
4.2	Work up to your dog wearing their muzzle for 1 minute before rewarding
4.3	Continue building up the time your dog spends with the muzzle on gradually, starting to use it for short periods when you're going out for walks whilst reducing the rate of reinforcement (If your dog paws at the muzzle or rubs it on the ground try to distract them from it with movement such as encouraging them to run with you and then remove the muzzle. You will need to go back a few stages and build up the duration slowly)



4.4	Once your dog feels comfortable wearing their muzzle for short periods, be sure to practice wearing the muzzle in a variety of spaces and scenarios. Use during other activities, on various offsites, in indoor spaces ect.
4.5	If your dog is being muzzle trained for specific triggers/scenarios such as vet visits, grooming ect. be sure to practice wearing the muzzle in these environments. You may need to take a few steps back with the training if your dog feels particularly stressed in this space.

For further video guidance on how to muzzle train your dog positively please visit the link below and watch the video provided; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfhC37fceE&t=29s>

