

Training Your Dog to Wear a Muzzle

The following training technique can be used to train your dog to wear a nylon or basket muzzle. Your dog should think that learning to wear a muzzle is a fun game. You will know whether you have trained your dog well if he or she looks forward to wearing a muzzle.



1. These nylon muzzles are readily available and are used by many veterinary clinics and groomers. These muzzles are designed to fit snugly. Because they do not allow panting, they are not for long-term

use and should be used only for quick procedures.



2. Use something sticky and edible (for example, peanut butter or cream cheese) to attach a treat to the bottom of a Styrofoam or paper cup and offer it to your dog. This will teach your dog that sticking his or her nose in a small space can be rewarding. You can also feed your dog small meals from the cup. To help you and your dog proceed quickly and easily through the training session, you can prepare several cups with your dog's meal divided among them. The cup should be short enough that your dog can reach the treats. If your dog has a short snout, you can cut the cup to make it shorter so that your dog's tongue can reach the treats or food. Be sure to remove sharp edges from the cup and avoid contacting your dog's eyes with the cup.



3. Once your dog is readily putting his or her nose in the cup, it is time to add the muzzle by pushing it all the way into the cup and folding the extra material over the edge of the cup.



4. Then put a treat(s) in the muzzle-lined cup and offer it to your dog.



5. Slowly raise the strap on the muzzle as your dog eats the treat(s). As long as your dog is distracted by the treat(s), you may continue. The goal is to remove the muzzle and cup before your dog finishes the treat(s). Repeat this process until you can apply the strap. If at any time your dog struggles or backs away, stop and repeat the previous step.



6. After you attach the muzzle, remove the cup and continue to feed treats while your dog is wearing the muzzle.



7. To remove the muzzle, offer the treat-filled cup to your dog. While your dog is distracted by eating the treat(s), remove the muzzle.