

## Muzzle Training

When used correctly, muzzles are a wonderful tool that can give your dog more freedom and reduce stress. Muzzles can help in many situations:

- allow your dog to be safely around other dogs or people
- prevent dogs from eating rocks, sticks, and other objects that can cause gastrointestinal obstructions
- If your dog needs veterinary treatment and is scared or in pain, wearing (and being comfortable wearing) a muzzle can get you in and out of there much faster and with less stress.

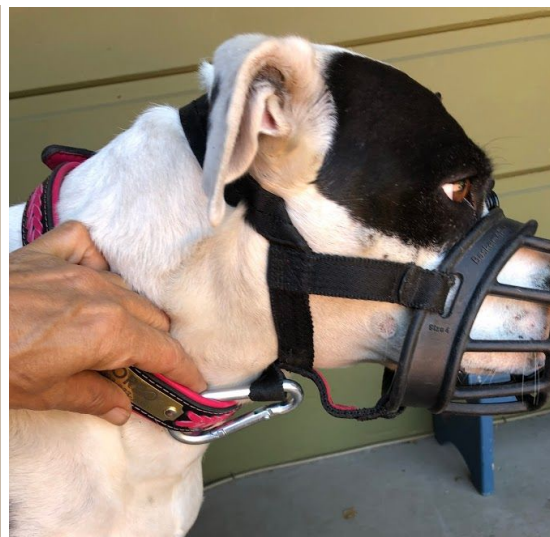
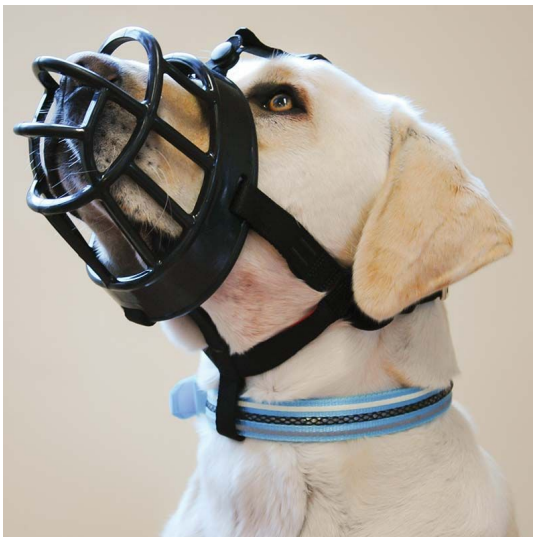
With proper training, the dog will be comfortable and happy wearing the muzzle.



### *Which Muzzle Is Right?*

The muzzle must be properly fitted so the dog can breathe/pant, eat treats, and drink water while wearing it. Nylon muzzles may seem gentler, but are actually more restrictive because they must tightly hold the dog's mouth shut if they are to prevent a bite. **We encourage using basket muzzles** e.g. Baskerville brand (available on Amazon → "baskerville muzzle").

- Measure your dog for the correct size. For a regular 50-60lb pit/staffie type dog, a size 4 tends to fit.



\* Notice **the muzzle must be attached to the collar** so the dog cannot flip it upward to get out of it. Use the existing loop, or else buy and clip on a carabiner instead. \*

- Depending on your dog's snout, you may want to **adjust the shape** of the Baskerville muzzle; you can do so by soaking it in boiling hot water for a few minutes and then pushing/pressing to change shape:  
→ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=69&v=1VdFWEo2XiM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=69&v=1VdFWEo2XiM)
- Dogs with very flat or very long noses may need a different style, and the Baskerville may not fit well even when adjusted. Do some online research (google "muzzle for flat faced dog / bulldog muzzle" or "muzzle for long-nose dogs / greyhound muzzle"). There are also custom made muzzles you can order.



## *How Do I Start Muzzle Training*

Teaching a dog to accept a muzzle should be done during low stress times, so that there is no association between the muzzle and pain or fear or other stress. The goal is for your dog to learn that **Muzzle = Good things!**

1. Begin by letting the dog sniff the muzzle at his own pace.
2. Put a few treats near it, and then inside it. You can also smear the inside of the muzzle with peanut butter or cheese. The dog will need to stick his nose into the muzzle to get to the treat, and that's exactly what we want; for the dog to happily stick his nose in there, and be rewarded for it with tasty goodness. Repeat this step a few times.
  - a. If you hold the muzzle in your hand while you let the dog do this, you're already making step 3 easier.
  - b. If your dog is very shy and hesitant of the muzzle, set the muzzle down and let them lick the treats out of it on their own for a couple of days, before you up the game to holding the muzzle in your hands.
3. Once the dog happily sticks his nose into the muzzle, quickly buckle it up (it is

worth practicing this beforehand, without the dog, so that you can do it quickly without fumbling). Give the dog a few more treats, reward him for wearing the muzzle.

4. Then take it back off. Repeat this several times over the course of a few days, leaving the muzzle on longer each time.
  - a. if your dog starts to fight the muzzle or tries to rub it off, don't let him! Distract and/or correct him, make him walk around, call him to you for a few treats, go for a little walk etc. Anything to have him forget the muzzle and just relax or walk with you.

*Here is a video of how to get your dog used to wearing the muzzle in a positive way:*

→ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=35&v=sQpIe\\_zN7C](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=35&v=sQpIe_zN7C)

### *Please Remember:*

- Your dog will wear the muzzle in necessary situations, so you can work with your dog, and/or have him/her with other dogs or around humans safely.
- It should not be used for long time periods, but at most an hour or so at a time.
- Never leave your dog unattended in the muzzle.
  
- IT IS NOT A QUICK FIX FOR AGGRESSION! You cannot simply muzzle the dog and then throw him into social situations with other dogs or people.



- **HOW TO WORK USING THE MUZZLE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH A TRAINER.**
- This handout is simply about getting your dog accustomed to a muzzle, then the work begins. Please consult a professional.