

Dog: Basket Muzzle



Benefit

Sometimes it is beneficial for your dog to wear a basket muzzle. The muzzle will keep you and others safe. When your dog is properly introduced to the muzzle, it can make him more relaxed and comfortable during the behavior modification program—or anything else your dog may not like.

Warning: Do not try to place a basket muzzle if your dog tries to bite you. Also do not place a muzzle to avoid bites but still place your dog in the situation where he wants to bite. For example don't keep taking an aggressive dog to the dog park or have people touch and handle him. A basket muzzle should be used in addition with a behavior modification program.

What You Need

- A muzzle that fits properly.
- Peanut butter or cheese in a can.
- 5 minutes 2–3 times daily.

How to Train It

Step 1. Choose a neutral time, for example after exercise when you're home with him in the evenings relaxing on the couch.

Step 2. If your dog has a severe aversion to muzzles, he may need to start out with you showing him the muzzle, and then giving a treat with your free hand (while your dog looks at the muzzle).

Step 3. Once your dog is happily accepting seeing the muzzle, hold the muzzle out with a treat in it. Let your dog take treats out of the muzzle like a horse would from a feedbag. Repeat this several times without buckling the muzzle, until your dog's reaction is excitement and a search for treats.

Step 4. Before you buckle the muzzle around your dog's head, smear a bit of peanut butter at the end of the muzzle and let him lick at it while you're pretending to buckle it around his neck.

Step 5. Now move on to buckling the muzzle around your dog's head, but remove it well before your dog becomes uncomfortable and paws at it.

Step 6. Once your dog isn't responding to the muzzle around his face or to you fidgeting with the buckle, proceed to leaving the muzzle buckled for a few seconds before you remove it. After several sessions (on, buckle, wait a few seconds, unbuckle, off), place the muzzle on, buckle it and leave it on for a few minutes.

Step 7. Gradually, increase the amount of time your dog wears the muzzle. Continue to give your dog treats through the openings in the muzzle to encourage him to stay relaxed.

Tips

- Treats like Pupparoni or Nutro Lamb and Rice Sticks fit well through the muzzle. Canned cheese or peanut butter is also well liked by most dogs and can be served on a spoon.
- Help your dog become and stay comfortable by placing the muzzle on at random times, not just when you are going to carry out behavior treatments.
- To create a positive association with the muzzle you can even play a game of fetch while wearing it.