

MUZZLE TRAINING



GOAL: At the end of training, dog will place his nose in the muzzle, wait for the straps to be fastened, and wear it happily for a 20-minute activity like a walk or playgroup.

Select a basket muzzle that fits the dog comfortably without compressing the dog's muzzle or touching his eyes.

TREATS TO USE:

- **Steps 1-4:** Easy Cheese in a can or other soft treats dispensed from a tube; or long thin treats that can be fed through the muzzle.
- **Steps 5 on:** peanut butter, cream cheese, wet dog or cat food that the dog will be able to lick through the muzzle while you work with the straps.

IMPORTANT TIPS:

- Avoid moving the muzzle toward the dog at any time during this training. The goal is to end the interaction with the muzzle while the dog is still having fun, before he wants to back away.

During all steps, it is critical that the dog is comfortable with the muzzle. If the dog shows signs of fear or discomfort, back up to an easier step.

- At each step, give the cue (present the muzzle). If the dog performs the desired behavior, reward with a treat. If the dog walks away or appears uncomfortable, immediately back up to an easier step.

GRADING RULES:

- Work in sets of 10 tries.
- If the dog gets it right 10 times out of 10, move to next step.
- If the dog gets it right 9 times out of 10, repeat the current step.
- If the dog gets it right 8 times or fewer out of 10, drop to the previous step.
- During steps 1-4, move the muzzle away from the dog as he finishes the treats.

THE PLAN:

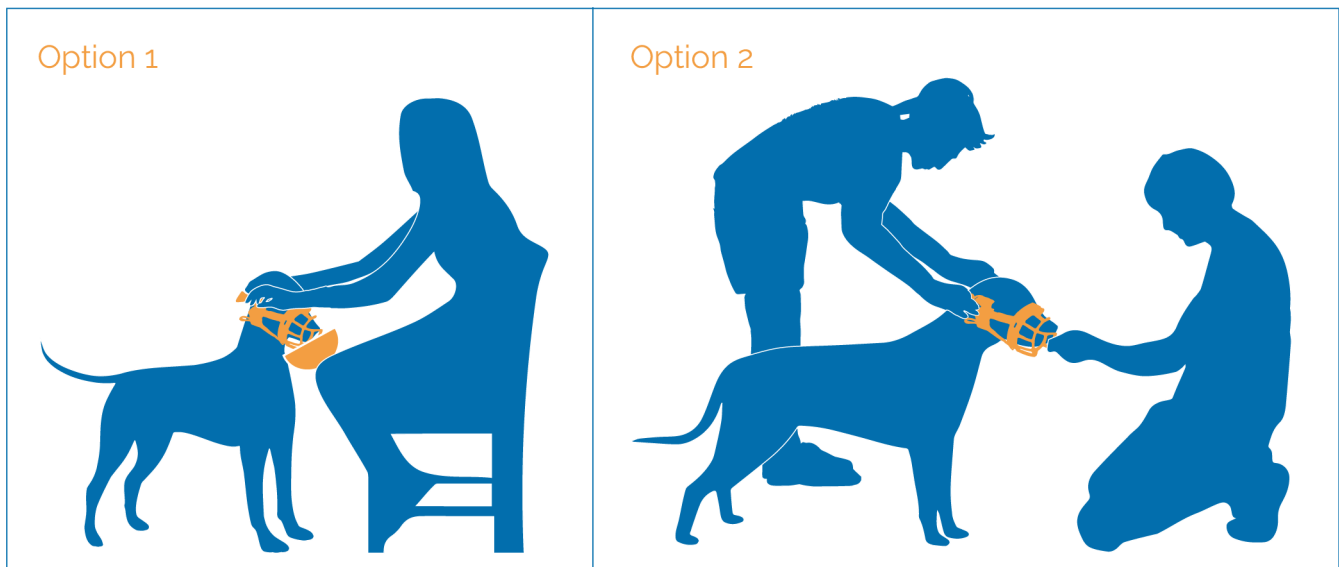
Step	What the dog needs to do to get treats	# right
1	Hold a treat or treat tube through the front of the muzzle. The dog must push his nose into the muzzle to get the reward. Remember to repeat each step 10 times & refer to grading rules.	

THE PLAN (cont):

Step	What the dog needs to do to get treats	# right
2	Hold out the muzzle with no treat visible. When the dog sticks his nose into the muzzle, say "yes" (or use another marker) & reward through the muzzle.	
3	Repeat step 2 but now wait for the dog to hold his nose inside the muzzle for 2 seconds. Reward through the muzzle.	
4	Repeat step 2, but now the dog must hold his nose inside the muzzle for 3 seconds.	

Prep for steps 5-8:

Coat the inside of the muzzle with a soft gooey treat like peanut butter or cream cheese. Because you need both hands to handle the muzzle straps during these steps, and the muzzle doesn't have much surface area to hold treats, it is helpful to smear the gooey treat on something that the muzzle can be placed on. This can be a bowl or toy held between your knees or feet, or attached to a wall. Or, a helper can feed treats while you work with the muzzle straps (see below).



If at any point the dog tries to back out of the muzzle before you've finished manipulating the straps, remove the straps immediately.

THE PLAN (cont):

Step	What the dog needs to do to get treats	# right
5	When the dog has placed his nose into the muzzle & is busy licking the treat, hold the main 2 straps closed briefly behind the dog's head, then release the straps.	
6	Repeat step 5, but now thread the strap through the buckle, then immediately unthread and release the straps.	
7	Repeat step 5, but now buckle the straps for 1-2 seconds, then unbuckle and release the straps.	
8	Repeat step 7, but now add attachment of the forehead strap (for Baskerville muzzles). Pause 1 second, deliver an extra special treat, then immediately unbuckle and release all straps.	

If at any point the dog is vigorously pawing or scratching at the muzzle, remove the muzzle and drop back to the previous step. A dog can injure his face attempting to remove the muzzle.

9	The dog must place his nose into the muzzle (smear with treats) & keep it there without trying to back out while you buckle all buckles. Deliver an additional special treat through the muzzle, then remove the muzzle.	
10	Same as step 8, but after buckling the muzzle and providing the special treat, call or lure the dog to take 1-2 steps toward you for an extra special treat.	
11	Repeat step 10 but ask for 3-4 steps toward you to earn the special treat.	
12	Slowly increase the number of steps needed to get the treat until the dog can walk or run across a yard with the muzzle on.	
13	The dog wears the muzzle for the first 30 seconds of a leashed walk without fussing with it, with treats given every several steps.	
14	The dog wears the muzzle for 2-3 minutes during a leashed walk without fussing with it, with treats given every several steps.	
15	The dog wears the muzzle during a 10-15 minute leashed walk without fussing with it, with treats given every several steps.	
16	The dog wears the muzzle in a variety of situations, such as dog playgroups. At this stage in the training, if the dog starts to worry the muzzle, call him over for a treat.	
17	Dog places nose in muzzle, waits for straps to be fastened and wears it happily for a 20-minute activity like a walk or playgroup.	