

Behaviour: Dogs and muzzles

Dogs that are used to wearing muzzles are very comfortable with them. The best type of muzzle is the Baskerville muzzle – its open basket weave allows the dog to breathe freely. Other types of muzzles that completely close a dog's mouth do not allow them to pant to lose heat. The Baskerville is available from vets and good pet shops.



Make sure you get the correct size for your dog. The piece that goes across the nose mustn't rub their eyes.

To get your dog used to wearing the muzzle, put some of their favourite food in the bottom of it (cream cheese is useful as it's sticky) and raise the muzzle to the dog's nose. They're likely to smell the food inside and put their nose into it themselves. Don't try to fasten the muzzle at this stage, just let the dog eat the treat. Do this a few times and make sure that you behave in a jolly and positive way throughout.

With time, you can actually work up to fastening the muzzle. At first, just fasten it and

take it off right away. Gradually leave it on for longer periods – but be unpredictable. Sometimes remove it immediately; other times leave it on for longer.

Vary the places where you put the muzzle on (including doing it outside, in the garden or while you're out for a walk) and vary the times of day that you practice. But remember to always associate wearing the muzzle with something your dog likes, such as going for a walk or being fed food treats while wearing the muzzle. By keeping your dog active and feeding them treats you'll also reduce the opportunity for them to try and take it off.

When your dog is used to the muzzle, make sure it's properly fitted. If it's too loose, they may be able to shake it off. The clasp around the neck should not allow more than ONE small finger to be inserted under the strap. When you're sure it's tight enough stitch the strap so that it's always the correct length and doesn't work loose.

You may also find it useful to read Advice Sheet 8.

