

# Desensitizing to Muzzles

Muzzles prevent injury to dogs, people, and other animals. **Every dog** should be trained to wear a muzzle in case of an emergency. Basket-type muzzles are preferred for training situations, particularly those that enable a dog to pant, accept treats, and drink water. They are typically made of plastic, rubber, wire, or leather. **Usage:** Muzzles are used to prevent scared or in-pain dogs from biting. While wearing a basket muzzle, dogs should be able to comfortably pant and eat treats. Muzzles should never be used to control problem behaviors such as chewing or barking. Nor should they be used as punishment. Dogs should never be left unsupervised with a muzzle. Dogs can become anxious when wearing a muzzle if the muzzle is only associated with stressful situations. Only venture out once you are confident your dog has accepted it. It's best to start in familiar areas for shorter amounts of time.



**Fit:** A muzzle is placed on a dog's snout and is usually secured with two horizontal straps that fasten behind the ears; some also have an over-the-forehead/between-the-ears strap. It needs to fit exactly to prevent it from coming off or limiting a dog's ability to breathe and pant; it should be snug, but not tight. Owners should carefully read and follow a manufacturer's instructions for properly sizing a dog muzzle. Always take off the muzzle to adjust the straps.

Slowly build up time spent in the muzzle: 15 seconds, 30 seconds, 45 seconds, etc. Continue to feed treats while your dog is wearing the muzzle. Once your dog is comfortable wearing the muzzle for 60 seconds you can start adding distractions **(NOT STIMULI)** while the dog is wearing the muzzle.

**Steps:**  
Starting slow—first, introduce the muzzle to your dog by allowing him to sniff it. Leave the muzzle out where the dog can see it. Feed your dog meals next to the muzzle. Give treats next to the muzzle. Once your dog starts to associate the muzzle with good things. Once you take treats and will eat confidently next to the muzzle move on to fitting it to the dog.

With the muzzle in your hand, touch it to its nose and reward it. Repeat until your dog is comfortable taking the treat. Next, place the muzzle on your dog's nose and reward. Remove it while your dog is still calm. Repeat until your dog confidently takes the treat from inside the muzzle. Once your dog offers to put their nose in the muzzle, with little hesitation fasten it. (Take the muzzle off to adjust the size) Give treats to your dog while it is wearing the muzzle. After rewarding your dog unfasten and remove the muzzle calmly. Repeat while adjusting the size until you have a good fit on the muzzle.



Unleashed Private Dog Training  
<https://www.unleashedwithaulilovoi.com/>

Helpful links:

Video on training:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FABgZTFvHo>

Muzzles: <https://miasmuzzles.com/>