

## MuzzleUp!

Let's start by saying, muzzles are wonderful! Often, people have very negative associations with muzzles, but in reality muzzles are an excellent tool to help people and dogs stay safe and feel comfortable.

### Uses:

- Dogs with a bite history
- Dogs with Pica (disorder in which dogs obsessively eat objects)
- Dogs that play too rough
- Dogs that are fear aggressive
- Dogs that are destructive
- Dogs that have problems at the vet or groomer
- etc.

### Benefits:

- Dogs are unable to use their teeth
- Dogs are unable to get items into their mouth
- Dogs have to come up with other options (ex. Change play style)
- Owners know the dogs cannot bite (relieves stress)
- Vets and groomers can more easily handle dogs
- Vets can do procedures without extra sedation or restraint
- The public tends to give the dogs more space
- Removes opportunity for dogs to bite which removes liability for owners
- Serve as a work uniform telling dogs what set of behavior is acceptable
- A muzzled dog is safer than an unmuzzled dog - regardless of the circumstance
- etc.

### Muzzle Art!!

-using patterned duct tape, fleece, padding, etc., muzzles can be beautified and modified to help your dog feel more comfortable and help change the muzzle stigma!



These materials are provided for you as a way to review behaviors previously discussed in training sessions. It is important for the success of both you and your dog, that these materials are used for reviewing, not for teaching. Do not skip ahead, even if you think your dog is ready. Every dog, every owner, and every situation is specific and requires a training program catered to fit; because these handouts are very general, please talk to Kelsey before attempting any of these training techniques on your own.



### Training Protocol: Classical Conditioning

-Using classical conditioning techniques, we can create a “conditioned emotional response” in our dog when they see and/or wear the muzzle. This means that by using consistent, simple training techniques, the dog will actually learn to enjoy the muzzle.

-Step 1: place the muzzle on the ground, drop chicken pieces on the ground, remove muzzle once chicken is eaten. Repeat randomly throughout the day(s). When dog gets excited when the muzzle is presented, proceed to Step 2.

-Step 2: hold muzzle open with straps out of the way so dog can stick their nose into the muzzle, hold treat through the nose hole of muzzle (if muzzle doesn't have a nose hole - cut one), let dog voluntarily stick nose in the muzzle and eat treat, remove muzzle so dog doesn't back out of it, put muzzle away. Repeat randomly throughout the day(s). The dog should be excited to jam their nose into the muzzle to get the treat, with no hesitation, before moving to Step 3.

-Step 3: start with multiple treats, do Step 2, feed one treat, place strap behind dog's ears, feed treat, remove muzzle. Gradually work up to being able to buckle the muzzle, treating generously. Then take muzzle off and stop treating. If at any point, the dog shows signs of stress, avoidance behavior, fearful behavior, or even apathetic behavior when presented with the muzzle, GO BACK. Repeat Steps 1 and 2 until dog shows a positive conditioned emotional response when presented with the muzzle.

-to have a successful conditioned emotional response, you need to have good timing. Treats always happen immediately after muzzle is presented so the muzzle predicts the treats. It's important that the MUZZLE predicts the chicken: don't say anything, crinkle treat bags, grab chicken from another location, etc., the only indicator that chicken is coming is that muzzle is presented.

-to have a successful conditioned emotional response, you need to have high value treats. I mention chicken but use whatever your dog thinks is most valuable: cheese, hot dogs, freeze dried liver, etc.

-to have a successful conditioned emotional response, you need to be consistent. EVERY time the muzzle is presented, so are the treats. Do not put the muzzle on without doing the proper training protocol, even once.

### Training Protocol: Playing Games

-once the dog is willingly and pleasantly putting on the muzzle, we need to work on adding duration. Using walks, toy play, training games, etc. we can add duration in fun and exciting ways. We do not want the muzzle to be worn long enough for the dog to begin showing signs of stress or frustration. Super short, frequent doses of muzzle wearing paired with fun activities will maintain the positive association you spent so much time creating.

-if the muzzle is used in less than positive scenarios (like the vet's office), make sure to have a 10:1 positive to negative experience ratio. If you only use the muzzle during negative experiences, you will undo your muzzle training and your dog will stop trusting your training protocol.

-find it games: get a treat that your dog can pick up through the muzzle, drop treats on the ground and tell your dog to find it. As your dog masters the skill of picking up items through the muzzle, you can work on hiding treats in slightly more complicated places.

-toy games: get a toy that your dog can pick up through the muzzle (rope toys work well) and play fetch with the dog. Get a toy that your dog can target (poke with nose) and play soccer type games or set up the target toy in different locations so dog can find it and target it. Always treat the dog to continue to reinforce good behaviors.

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