



Introducing a muzzle

Using a muzzle can be helpful in a number of circumstances:

- In certain Veterinary procedures a muzzle may be required
- When introducing another dog or puppy into the household
- In cases of pain related temporary aggression
- When introducing cats and other animals
- Some behavioural modifications or training procedures may require a muzzle
- If advised by a professional after any aggressive incident

It is vital that your dog perceives the muzzle as a positive experience. Quite often the dog's first encounter with a muzzle is in a stressful and fearful situation, such as at the vets because the dog may become aggressive or difficult to handle because of fear, panic, or injury.

Introduce your dog to the muzzle over a period of time. There are numerous types on the market, such as the Baskerville type, which is normally a fawn or black plastic muzzle with the large open vents, which allows good ventilation, or a canvas muzzle with or without pinprick holes. The Baskerville Ultra have a small plastic section near the nose end that can be removed to allow extra room.

The Baskerville Ultra muzzle should be used in most instances and always when the dog will be wearing it for some time and when out and about.

Introducing a muzzle must always be rewarding and positive.

- Allow your dog to sniff the muzzle as you handle it. Let them explore it, nudge it or whatever. Remember it's something new.
- Either drop a piece of food (cheese is ideal) into the basket muzzle or hold a titbit up to end of the mesh type muzzle and bring it up to your dog's nose. The dog will smell the food and press forward to get at the titbit pushing their face into the muzzle as they does so. Carefully slide the muzzle a little way over the nose so they can get the treat, then immediately remove it praising at the same time.
- Repeat this a number of times over a number of days in different places in the house and garden, say 10 times a day if possible. Your dog should now be happily thrusting their head into the muzzle.
- The next stage is to clip the muzzle on for a few seconds, and then take it off immediately. Repeat often, gradually increasing the time the muzzle is left on from seconds to minutes then longer. Make sure it is not too restrictive and tight around the mouth and nose as this can restrict drinking and breathing and could distress the dog.

Never leave the muzzle on for long periods and always supervise the dog when they are wearing one.

Get in touch if you need more advice and help.