



Muzzle Conditioning

Step 1: Size Correctly

Making sure the muzzle is the correct size and shape is essential.

We recommend a **BASKET-STYLE MUZZLE** for training and safety purposes.

- ✓ Your dog **should be able to** chew, pant and drink comfortably through the muzzle.
- ✓ Your dog's nose **should not be** squished at the end of the muzzle.
- ✓ The muzzle **must not be** putting pressure at the base of the eyes.
- ✓ You **should not be able to** put more than three fingers through any opening where it meets your dog's face.
- ✓ You can mold some brands of plastic basket muzzles by heating them in hot water.



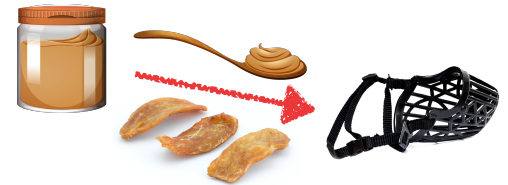
Once attached, straps should be tightened snugly. A loose muzzle can be dangerous and is **NOT** more comfortable for your dog.

Step 2: Pair 'Good Things'

Using counter-conditioning, pair good things with the sight, sound, feel and smell of the muzzle.

We recommend **USING FOOD OR A HIGH VALUE ITEM** to create a positive association.

Fill the base of the muzzle with a long lasting food. (Ideally something the dogs can lick like peanut butter or cream cheese.) You can even use your muzzle as a bowl and feed your dog his meals from it everyday!



Don't force it. Make it a fun game for your dog. Always end on a successful note. Short successful sessions are ideal.

Step 2: Systematically Desensitize

We recommend you **START IN A CALM, FAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT**. Hold the muzzle and allow your dog to voluntarily put his face in to eat the food. Slowly begin touching the straps to the sides of his face while he eats.

ONLY after multiple successful repetitions will you attempt to fasten the muzzle. Once you fasten the muzzle,

only keep it on while the 'GOOD THINGS' are still available, then remove the muzzle and leave him wanting more. Slowly increase the time he wears it and pair it with fun activities. Eventually you can start delivering treats through the muzzle and increase the time intervals.

If your dogs begins to paw at the muzzle, interrupt him by trying to engage his nose with food. This is a good indicator that you've moved forward too quickly.