



Muzzle Conditioning

Muzzle conditioning in dogs is a very controversial topic. Muzzles, when used properly, are amazing tools that allow dogs and humans to enjoy a variety of situations without worrying. If you have a dog who is dog reactive on leash, and you are concerned about your dog hurting another dog, putting a muzzle on your dog can give you both some peace of mind while out. This also makes training your dog more comfortable and feasible.

Begin by putting the muzzle into a box with treats in it, show your dog to the box and let your dog put his face in the muzzle without you near the box. Once your dog has finished the treats and removed him/herself from the box, add more treats and repeat the process. Once your dog is completely comfortable putting his/her face in the muzzle, take the muzzle out of the box and do the same thing, but holding the muzzle with 1 hand, and treats at the mouth of the muzzle with the other. The dog should put his/her face into the muzzle and eat the treats without hesitation. After a few repetitions of this, start asking your dog to put his/her face into the muzzle with the cue 'muzzle' and reward with a YES marker and a treat.

Once your dog is comfortable putting his/her face into the muzzle on cue, begin asking him/her to hold his/her face in the muzzle for slightly longer, and reward. Do this until they are 100% comfortable holding their face in the muzzle for 5-10 seconds. Then you can begin moving the straps around WITHOUT attaching them, and reward. Do this until you can move the straps freely without a reaction from your dog. Once your dog is comfortable with this step, start attaching the muzzle, and detaching it within about 2 seconds, reward. At this point, your dog should be so excited about the idea of the muzzle, you don't even have to cue 'muzzle' before your dog tries to put his/her face into it. This is when you can start attaching it for longer periods and walk around with it on, keep rewarding throughout the process. If at any point you notice your dog is uncomfortable, stop training and go back to the step he/she last felt comfortable with. DO NOT MOVE TOO QUICKLY! You want the muzzle to be fun and happy or you will not get the overall training results you want.

Support:

Our Behaviour Support Team can help to provide resources and tips if you experience concerns in the home environment. With your adoption the GTHS will provide an over the phone consultation in order to provide you with tips and resources to set your new dog up for success. In all cases of dog adoptions, the GTHS recommends hiring a professional dog training or behavioural consultant to ensure your relationship with your new dog starts off on the right paw! A list of local trainers is enclosed in your adoption package.

Our Behaviour Support Team can be reached at behaviour@gths.ca

Georgian Triangle Humane Society

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