



Muzzles for Bite Prevention (Until all aggression is gone.)

MANAGEMENT

Bite prevention is a serious responsibility until we are sure all potential aggression behavior is gone, including agitated barking, growling, lip snarling, lunging and snapping. Manage your dog by keeping him/her away from people, unless they are wearing a muzzle.

Using a muzzle will help until all aggression is gone. A muzzle doesn't have to be a "bad" object. In fact, our goal is to get your dog to WANT to have it put on! So, try this exercise several times a day, going a little further each day until we reach our goal of your dog wanting you to put it on completely. Begin by showing your dog the muzzle and asking him/her "Do you want this?" in a very excited tone and then "You can't have it!" and put it back in the cabinet/closet where he/she will anticipate it coming out again. The next few times use food as a reward for allowing you to put it near your dog – pretend it's a toy to help make it fun. Repeat this until he/she associates the appearance of the muzzle with getting a really good treat and playtime. Next, feed your dog through the wire basket with your dog on the outside of the muzzle and your hand inside. Do this until he/she is happy to take the treat without hesitation. Then try putting his/her nose in briefly just a little and pull it away and scream with delight! The next step is resting it on the dog's nose briefly and giving him/her the treats through the muzzle, repeat this until he/she puts their nose into the muzzle on their own to get the treat. (You may need to use extra special treats and do this when you know he/she is hungry to get this part done successfully.) Make a big fuss about what a good boy/girl they are and emphasize the fun the two of you are having – make it a party! Once your dog is happy about having the muzzle rest on his/her nose, hold the straps as if they were tightened for just a second, then release and give treats through the wire on the muzzle. Continue with this until he/she is quite happy about you strapping the muzzle on and fitting it to them. Play a game with your dog while he/she is wearing the muzzle to get their mind off of it or take your dog for a walk each time you put the muzzle on even if it is a short walk. We want the dog to learn that muzzle = walk so consistency and repetition is everything. If your dog becomes agitated with it, remove it at once and put it away. Stop all play & treats. Always go back a step if he/she shows signs of stress. This is a worthwhile exercise even though it seems to take a lot of your time. We don't want your dog to think it is a "bad thing" when they have it on.

Call me with questions! I love to talk about dogs and see undesired behaviors replaced with good behaviors.
Lynne

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