

The Gentle Leader Headcollar

The Gentle Leader was designed to work with a dog's pack instincts, helping to communicate with your dog in a way he immediately understands. The pressure applied to the nose is similar to the Alpha dog in a pack biting the muzzle telling the animal to stop the behavior. Additionally, the pressure on the back of the neck is like the mother dog gently mouthing a puppy telling him to stop the behavior. After your dog has become accustomed to the collar, he will immediately understand what you want since you are communicating in his language. It is NOT a muzzle!

My Dog Hates It!

A lot of people have told me over the years that they have tried the Gentle Leader but their dogs "hated it". Well, of course they do, because they aren't in control anymore-You are! The more they hate it, the more they need it. Most dogs will fight it but 99 % of them will 'give in' within minutes because our dogs are looking for a leader, and by using the Gentle Leader, you are telling them that you're the boss.

The best thing about the Gentle Leader is that it doesn't cause pain or fear like other training tools can. If fit properly by a trained professional, it will allow you to create a happy, secure bond with your dog and make walks more enjoyable. Additionally, if you have a dog with behavior problems, it will assist in re-conditioning those behaviors without pain - making life better for you as well as your dog.

The Gentle Leader® will resemble a "V" for "Victory"!, not an "L" for "Loser."

The Neck Strap MUST 1-Be positioned as high on the neck as possible, directly behind the ears and touching the base of the skull in back, and above the Adam's apple in front. 2- Not be able to rotate around neck. 3- Fit very snugly at top of neck so that you can barely squeeze only one finger underneath. This is the MOST important part of the entire fitting process! It is different than other collars you may be used to, but does not cause discomfort to your dog. Please resist the temptation to make the Neck Strap loose - if you loosen it, either your dog will be able to paw the Nose Loop off, or you will wind up making the Nose Loop too tight or the Nose Loop will rotate causing discomfort.

YES



NO



The Nose Loop should:

- Be loose and comfortable so that your dog can freely open his mouth (even fetch a ball!).
- Be able to move freely from just in front of eyes to beginning of the fleshy (wet) part of nose.
- Rest behind the corners of mouth.
- Not be so loose that it can be pulled off over the nose (after snap clamp is adjusted).

FITTING STEP BY STEP

Throughout the fitting process and during initial use of the Gentle Leader, motivate and encourage your dog with praise and special tasty treats. If your dog is especially wiggly, have someone help you by feeding treats while you fit and adjust.



1. Attach leash to Control Ring. (Fig. A)

2. Open Neck Strap and hold one end in each hand. Nose Loop and leash should hang down, like the letter (T). (Fig. B)



3. Prefit Neck Strap high on the neck touching base of skull in back, with Center Bar Ring in the niche just above the Adam's apple in front. Center Bar Ring should be parallel to neck, not the underside of jawbone. (Fig. C-1) Neck Strap must be snug so that only one finger can squeeze under it. Gently grasp skin at back of neck and pull downward toward shoulders, while at the same time holding Neck Strap against base of skull. Tighten if needed. (Fig. C-2)



4. Take Neck Strap off your dog. Slide Adjustable Snap Clamp down to Control Ring (as in Fig. A).

5. Pull Nose Loop up through Center Bar Ring. (Fig. D)



6. With dog at your side, in front of you, or between your legs, hold Nose Loop open. Reach under dog's head to slip Nose Loop onto base of muzzle (Fig. E-1), and give a treat to keep him occupied. Snap Neck Strap high on neck at its prefitted position. (Fig E-2) (Some people find that taking a few moments to gently "massage" their dog's muzzle and cheeks prior to putting on the Nose Loop may help him more quickly accept the new sensation.)



7. Make final adjustment to Nose Loop. It should be behind corners of mouth and loose enough to pull forward to fleshy part of nose, but not so loose that it can be pulled entirely off muzzle. Slide snap clamp up or down to adjust (Fig. F-1). With thumb and index finger, pinch Nose Loop underneath snap clamp, temporarily holding it from moving. Test size of Nose Loop by pulling it forward as far as it will go (Fig. F-2). When it touches the beginning of the fleshy part of the nose, but is not so loose that you can pull it off, close the snap clamp by pressing down on the tab - you'll hear a snap as it locks.

When your dog has reached full growth, you can remove any excess length of Neck Strap. With the Gentle Leader® off your dog, cut the end of the strap with scissors and use a match or lighter flame to seal the cut edge and prevent fraying.

Thin Nose Loop or Thick?

Several of the national and local pet store chains sell the Gentle Leader, but most of the staff do not know how to fit it, or which kind is most appropriate for which dog. Plus, they only sell the 'thin' nose loop kind (5/8"). I prefer to fit the 'thick' nose loop (3/4") on larger dogs, especially those with broad noses like labs and shepherds. If you are using a Gentle Leader for your dog and it is wearing off the hair on his nose, or causing sores, try switching to a 3/4" nose loop. You may also try wrapping some moleskin or fleece around the nose loop to decrease friction.

Acclimating your dog to the Gentle Leader

It's very important that you acclimate your dog slowly to the Gentle Leader. The neck strap is a pressure point that reminds your dog of the pressure the mother dog puts on the back of the neck when she picks up the puppies in the litter. The nose strap reminds your dog of the Alpha dog as it's similar to the pressure a higher ranking dog may use as a correction. Therefore, when your dog first experiences the Gentle Leader, he may think the mother dog and Alpha dog are sitting on his head! As long as you associate really positive things with the Gentle Leader, and never take it off when your dog is struggling, he or she will begin to enjoy having it on as it means walks and treats.

Always put the Gentle Leader on with a leash attached. If your dog fights it immediately when you put it on, GENTLY lift up on the leash at a constant rate towards the sky until your dog settles down and stops struggling. As soon as your dog relaxes, immediately loosen the gentle pressure on the leash so there is a 'J' in the leash, and praise and treat. Please DO NOT tug, jerk, or pull on the leash like you would with a choke chain correction. When lifting up on the leash, you only want to apply gentle pressure to the head collar so your dog will 'give in'.

In the beginning, put the collar on your dog several times a day for 2-3 minutes, give him treats, throw a toy, feed him, etc while he has it on. At the end of the 3 minutes, if he is not struggling, take the Gentle Leader off. Never take it off if your dog is struggling, because that is a reward for struggling. Gradually increase the amount of time he wears it in the house, and then begin putting it on at the end of your walks when he is tired. Increase the amount of time he wears it towards the end of the walk until you are actually putting it on in the beginning. If your dog tries to rub his nose on your leg, or sweep his head through the grass, don't let him. Lift up on the leash as stated above, and then loosen the leash and praise when he stops. Above all, make the time he has the Gentle Leader on FUN!

If your dog continues to fight it, make sure it is fit properly. If your dog's nose begins to chafe, make sure it is fit properly, change to a thick nose strap collar, or add some moleskin to the nose strap.