



**Desensitizing to the Muzzle by  
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[www.peacefulpaws.net](http://www.peacefulpaws.net)

1. Show the dog the muzzle several times during the day. Each time he looks at it, reward him with a generous portion of treats. When the dog is reliably displaying an excited anticipatory response to the muzzle (as he does when he sees his leash), you are ready for the next step.
2. Play the “touch” game with the muzzle. Once the dog is readily and quickly touching the muzzle, begin to reward only the prolonged touches. This gets the dog used to having the muzzle in contact with his nose for longer periods of time.
3. Now, hold a treat at the end of the muzzle with the opening facing toward the dog’s nose. Allow the dog to put his nose inside the muzzle, and then give him the treat. You can also put a smear of peanut butter inside at the end of the muzzle to entice the dog to insert his nose.
4. Gradually increase the time that the dog’s nose is inside of the muzzle by delaying delivery of the treat a few seconds.
5. Adjust the straps on the muzzle so that they fit very loosely. When the dog is acclimated to having his nose inside the muzzle for a few seconds, start to handle the muzzle straps while he waits for his treat. When he is comfortable with this, put the straps very loosely behind his ears.
6. When the dog is comfortable with the loosely fitting muzzle, gradually adjust the straps for a tighter fit. The muzzle fits correctly when the straps remain in place right behind the ears.
7. Make sure that you do not progress too quickly through these steps. You want the dog to be comfortable and happy throughout the desensitization process. Be sure that the dog has only pleasant experiences while wearing the muzzle.