

Headcollar training

Tiny De Keuster



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It may take a week or so to acclimatize your dog to a headcollar, but these tips should help to smooth the way.

1. Have some tasty treats to hand. Place the headcollar over your hand so that it hangs around your wrist.
2. With the same hand, hold a treat with your fingers and offer it to your dog, but holding the treat in such a way that the dog has to nibble at it. As he/she is nibbling the treat, simultaneously slide the collar over his/her face.
3. Now release the treat and, while the dog is munching, finish fitting the clasp. Give your dog another treat and praise him/her warmly.
4. At this point it is important to keep your dog distracted, either by playing with him/her or by letting him/her use a favourite toy. After 2–3 minutes remove the collar and play for a few more minutes.
5. Repeat this 3–4 times a day for the first week and only play with your dog whilst he/she is wearing the headcollar. As you progress, start to introduce a command word that your dog can begin to associate with the collar being fitted. Don't use a lead until you have completed this stage.
6. Once your dog is able to wear the collar for 5 minutes without distraction (i.e. without scratching or trying to remove it), attach the lead and continue playing with your dog for a few minutes. Repeat this until he/she is not distracted by the headcollar or the lead.
7. Once your dog is acclimatized, gradually build up the time he/she spends wearing the headcollar and lead, to the point where you can take short walks.

- ! Remember to keep this a positive experience for your dog and don't try to achieve too much in one go.**
- ! Don't allow your dog to wear a headcollar unsupervised, as this would give him/her a chance to learn how to remove the collar.**
- ! Never use retractable or very long leads as these may allow your dog to pick up speed before the lead takes up the slack.**

Resources and references

Animal Behavior Resources Institute (www.ABRInonline.org)