



## TRAINING ADVICE SHEET

### USING A GENTLE LEADER HEADCOLLAR

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This advice sheet will help your dog first to accept a Gentle Leader headcollar and then help you to use the headcollar correctly out on walks.

#### **🐾 ENSURING YOU HAVE A GOOD FIT**

The headcollar should fit snugly behind the ears – you may have to tighten it every now and then as it will loosen over time. The strap around the muzzle should also be snug and should not ride up too close to the dog's eyes.

#### **🐾 ACCLIMATISING YOUR DOG TO THE HEADCOLLAR**

It is important to ensure that your dog is comfortable with the headcollar on before you begin to take him or her on walks. This may take several days or a week depending on your dog.

1. Hold some treats in your hand and use these to lure your dog's nose through the loop. Once the nose is through the loop release the treats into your dog's mouth. Fasten the clasp behind your dogs ears and give him or her some more treats and praise for wearing the headcollar.
2. Take the headcollar off and repeat the process again until the dog is happy to have the headcollar taken on and off.
3. Once the dog is comfortable with this try leaving the headcollar on for a few minutes. During this time distract the dog with treats, toys, games and fuss. After a few minutes take the headcollar off and praise and reward the dog again.
4. Stay with this for a few days repeating several times a day, until your dog looks forward to having the headcollar on.
5. Once your dog is happy with the headcollar on for 5 minutes without scratching at it or trying to get out of it try attaching a lead to the headcollar and continue as above with games and treats.
6. Once your dog is happy with the headcollar and lead on try using it on a very short walk outside at first. For this I would suggest using a double ended lead with one end fastened to the headcollar and one end fastened to the dog's flat collar. This will ensure that if the dog slips out of the headcollar it will still be attached to the lead.
7. Whilst on your walk continue rewarding your dog with praise and treats, and distract your dog if he or she starts trying to paw at it.
8. Slowly build up the amount of time you can take your dog on a walk with the headcollar on ensuring your dog is happy at all times.

#### **🐾 TRAINING WITH THE HEADCOLLAR**

Once your dog is happy with the headcollar it is time to start using it on walks.

It is unrealistic to put the headcollar on and expect it to work magic, as a dog will soon become accustomed to the discomfort of the headcollar and simply continue pulling. We need to train the dog not to pull with the headcollar on.



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To do this place your dog in the position you want it to walk in, either left or right and set off. When your dog pulls, bring it back in place with a firm but smooth tug on the lead. Once your dog is back in place again ensure that the lead is loose.

The key to using the headcollar correctly is to ensure that the lead is only tight when the dog pulls forward, and remains loose when the dog is walking nicely. This way the dog learns that if it walks nicely the headcollar won't pull.

**🐾 POSITIVE ASSOCIATION**

Remember to ensure that wearing the headcollar is a positive experience for your dog and take your time with it. Don't leave the headcollar on unsupervised and don't allow your dog to paw at it or try to remove it – always distract from this behaviour.

Don't tug too hard on the lead to avoid injuries and never use a retractable lead or long line when using a headcollar.

*DISCLAIMER: Please note that all training and behavioural advice given is based on a wide range of research and experience, but will only help if the program is followed strictly and is not guaranteed.*



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