



## Training Equipment

Dog training is so versatile and every dog is different. Each pup responds to pieces of equipment differently and we must be sure to introduce each piece properly. Let's talk equipment!

**Leashes:** Leashes come in a variety of different sizes: 2, 4, 6 feet. When looking for the best leash to train with, we recommend a thin and lightweight material such as biothane or leather. From 1/4in to 1/2in in width; keep in mind a 2-foot leash is generally used for a “finished” dog or a heeling position.

**Slip Leashes:** Slip leashes can be made of many different types of material from leather, to braided nylon to flat nylon. This is a great tool as it can be used for a lot of things like moving/leashing an unfamiliar dog, training brand new behaviors or a quick leash to put on and off. The slip leash has a tab stopper that allows you to properly size the leash to the dog. Slip leashes are meant to be placed right behind the ears, up high and snug to prevent the leash from displacement. The leash should not be loose or hanging when used for training purposes and there should never be constant tension on the leash, as that disables the pressure and release action.

**Long Lines:** Long lines come in tons of sizes from 10ft to as long as 50 ft! Most commonly used would be a 30ft long line. These leashes are used for training recall and stays/waits at a distance but can be used for so much more.

**Tab Leash:** A tab leash is as long as 6 inches to 2 feet. These are used for transferring from on-leash to off-leash training. As well as allowing clients to have the ability to train in the home and still have a leash to communicate with their dog when needed. Those who do agility with their dog also use these to prevent their dog from stepping on the leash.

**Hands Free Leash:** This leash is best used with already trained dogs. This leash allows you the opportunity to remain hands free while your pup is still attached to you.

**Flexi Leashes:** Although these leashes are quite common and easy to use, it is not a good training tool due to the constant tension it gives the dog. These leashes are great for potty training a dog and exercising a dog. It does give about 26 feet of range and is retractable.

**Flat Collar:** Flat collars come in buckle form or in snap form. They come in many different sizes, colors and shapes. A flat collar must be comfortable for the dog and is generally used to simply hold identification and rabies tags. Wide leather collars are used commonly for exercises that you want your dog to pull, such as narcotic detection or protection training.

**Martingale Collar:** This collar may be referred as the “greyhound collar”. This collar is an adjustable no-slip collar and is difficult for a dog to back out of it. When fitted correctly it should be able to slip over the dog’s head snugly. This collar has limited closure to prevent the collar from becoming too tight. When you pull on the ring: if the two rings from the collar come together, then the collar is too loose. This collar also puts less pressure and a softer correction.

**Slip Collar:** A slip collar also known as a “choke collar” is a shorter version on the slip leash. This collar allows the handler to use pressure and release to communicate with their dog. They are available in woven nylon, leather, metal chain and much more. A properly fit slip collar should have about 2 inches left over after being fitted around the dog’s neck. If the dog is placed on the handler’s left side, make a P with the collar. If they are on the right side, make a Q with the collar. Face your dog and slip it over their head accordingly. When worn correctly the leash should go straight through the ring towards the handler, rather than over the metal ring towards the handler. Allowing the leash to release after a popped correction.

**Pinch/Prong Collar:** A pinch collar is a martingale type of collar with prongs going inwards. They are available in plastic or metal. It does look like a medieval torture tool but is actually the safest way to deliver a correction. It applies less pressure and simulates another dog giving them a correction, which is how canines learn in the wild. When fitted properly it should sit high, right behind the dog’s ears and be snug. When pulling on the flat ring, the 3 rings should not come together. If they do, the collar is too loose. If the collar is not moving at all when you apply pressure, it is too tight. With a properly fit collar, the dog should not even know that it is on. This collar evenly distributes pressure all the way around the dog’s neck versus one solid point of pressure and a correction with a pinch collar should be less forceful than a correction with the slip leash. Prong collars are typically used with forceful dogs who have a lot of strength but can be used for many different breeds and sizes.

**Starmark Plastic Pinch Collar:** This collar is a step before having to try a prong collar. It is another type of martingale collar and allows you the opportunity to use pressure and release to communicate with your dog. This collar gives less of a correction and is used for older or softer dogs. This tool can be put on by angling the links and unsnapping/snapping the pieces together. They should be fit the same way as other collars, high and snug right behind their ears.

**Head Halti:** Head halters have been used on horses for many years and with them comes the idea of “Where the head goes, the body follows.” Dogs must be properly conditioned to the equipment before using it. Most dogs will paw at it to try and get it off. Like any piece of training equipment, if not fitted correctly it can damage the eyes and neck of the dog. The head halti is good for dogs that tend to “mouth” a little, as this tool can close their mouth when you apply pressure with the leash.

**Gentle Leader:** The gentle leader is the same idea as the head halter. This allows you to control their head while still allowing them to open their mouth.

**Muzzle:** Muzzles are not always used to for dogs that are deemed aggressive or a bite risk. Muzzles can also be used to prevent your dog from picking up/eating things on your walks as well. Every dog should be properly muzzle conditioned in the case that your dog does need to be muzzled, like going to the vet, getting groomed or if they become injured and need help. This will allow the opportunity to be less stressful for your dog. Muzzles come in a variety of different materials, shapes and sizes. The type of muzzle you may need depends on the reason for needing one. A basket muzzle allows plenty of air flow, the ability to drink water and can be worn for longer periods of time.

**Harness:** This piece of equipment is used for dogs that you don't want to restrict pulling. This is designed for your dog to pull comfortably and is commonly used in sports like Tracking, Weight pulling and protection training. This is something they will learn to pull into and is good for dogs with overly sensitive neck or back problems.

**No-Pull Harness:** This harness is designed to hook the leash to the front of the dog, rather than the back. This harness more often than not will have the dog pulling sideways instead, shifting more of the chest cavity in the process. This equipment works great for dogs with trachea problems.

**Elevated/Platform Beds:** This is the ideal tool to use when teaching your dog a “Place” command. It has a clearly defined boundary of stepping on and off. Even if your end goal is to be on a soft bed or a blanket, it is always better to start with an elevated surface first.

**Crates/Kennels:** Crates come in many different materials and sizes. The two main ones are plastic and metal. Crates are great for providing a safe space for your dog as well as establishing structure and boundaries. It is also great for potty training, house training (keeping them from eating things if left unsupervised) and for travel. Properly conditioning the crate to build positive associations around it is key to having a well crate trained pup. Often times if conditioned correctly, dogs will use this as their cozy little den. Coming and going as they please.

**Training treats and Pouch:** During training it is vital to have really great treats as well as an easy way to store them for easy access. A good training treat should not take a long time to eat/chew like a milk bone. It should be something your pup really likes and finds special like diced up hotdog, cheese, chicken or liver. If you can save the really special high value ones for big rewards and use their kibble/small bite sized dog treats for regular rewards- even better! In higher leveled distractions you may need to bust out those special rewards. Having a pouch will allow you to reward in a timely manner and is especially useful for those beginning stages of training where many treat repetitions are needed.

**Clicker/Marker:** A clicker is a fun little hand-held device that allows you to make the same exact sound every time to mark a desired behavior. Also described as taking a mental photograph of the behavior that the dog was doing in that exact moment to produce a reward. A clicker must be “loaded” properly to condition the sound as a reward and the sound must always be followed with the treat reward.

**Toys/Interactive toys:** Don't forget about the impact a simple tug toy could have for your dog! If you find that your dog is not easily motivated by food, try using a toy instead. Toys are a great way to relieve stress, build motivation to work, exercise and come in all different varieties. Find their absolute favorite and save it for training sessions to reward! Interactive toys are used to mentally stimulate your pup's mind and keep them occupied for an amount of time. Most toys are something that you can stick treats into. These give your dog appropriate things to chew on and is a safe outlet for forging behaviors. These are also great for dogs with little to mild separation anxiety.