



Canine Companions Rescue Center

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Collars

There are a number of collars on the market today, so how do you know which one you should buy for your dog? Each collar excels in different situations so each one will be described below to help you make the right choice for you and your dog.

Flat Collars

A flat (snap or buckle) collar is the most common and every dog should wear one. It is not useful for training, but it is a must for holding your dog's identification and other tags. It should be snug enough not to slip over his head, but not too snug. If you can fit a few fingers under it comfortably that is a good fit. If your dog is already well trained and never pulls on a leash you can use this as your only collar, but be aware that the snap kind can break or come apart if a dog suddenly lunges.

Choke Collars

Choke collars are probably the other most common collar. It can be a chain or other material that slips tight around the dog's neck if he puts pressure on the leash. This collar can be an appropriate training collar for the dog that doesn't pull to give humane corrections when training. However, if your dog pulls you do not want to use this type of collar. It puts too much pressure on the neck and trachea and can do permanent damage (see the study below under Prong Collars).

Prong (Pinch) Collars

Prong collars look scary but in many cases *they can be the most humane collar for your pet*. If your pet ignores the discomfort of a flat or choke collar and pulls fairly hard, and/or gags and wheezes when on leash, you may want to use a prong collar, particularly for training.

A Study on Prong Collars was done in Germany. 100 dogs were in the study. 50 used choke and 50 used prong. The dogs were studied for their entire lives. As dogs died, autopsies were performed.

**Of the 50 which had chokes, 48 had injuries to the neck, trachea, or back.
2 of those were determined to be genetic. The other 46 were caused by trauma.**

**Of the 50 which had prongs, 2 had injuries in the neck area.
1 was determined to be genetic. 1 was caused by trauma.**

The numbers seem to speak for themselves.

(Information about this study taken from an Anne Marie Silverton Seminar)

Who needs a prong collar?

- Small people with large dogs.
- Dogs with a high pain tolerance that require very hard corrections.
- Dogs that seem calm but suddenly bursts into action in some circumstances.
- Dogs that pull hard enough to choke/gag on other collars.
- Disabled people with limited strength or range-of-motion to give hard corrections.
- Dogs with damaged trachea or collapsing tracheas.
- Walking more than one dog at the same time.

A pinch collar consists of a series of links with prongs pointing in toward the dog's neck. The prongs are rounded, not sharp, and their job is to pinch, not stab, poke, or scrape. A proper fit would look much like the picture on the right. When the collar is pulled snug, but not tight, on the dog's neck there should be approximately an inch of chain on either side of the circular ring before meeting the prong links. For adjustments, you may need to remove or add links in order to get the perfect fit. When putting the collar on you must make sure it is not twisted - the chain that the leash attaches to should be circular and move freely.

Over time the links may compress from being pinched over and over again and easily fall apart. As a safety measure some prong collar users will put an additional, oversized slip collar on the dog and attach their leash to both collars. This way they still have control of the dog if the prong collar comes loose.



Head Collars

Head collars are often mistaken for a muzzle but they don't serve the same function at all. Head collars, such as the Halti pictured on the right, are a great training tool for certain behavior problems. They are not necessarily good for basic obedience training because there is no way to give a correction. However, it is very useful for dogs that pull during walks, and for dogs who act up at the sight of other dogs, cars, etc. The idea behind this type of collar is to put pressure on the same points that dogs use when dominating another dog (the muzzle and the back of the neck). It is meant to tell the dog you are in charge and also physically prevent him from moving in a direction you don't want him to go. It does not keep them from eating, drinking, or for that matter, biting (that is what a muzzle is for). Head collars must be very snug or your dog can easily slip out of them.



You might find it useful to have several different collars for different situations (one for obedience, one for walks, and always a flat collar). Always make sure you get the proper size and make sure to properly fit the collars. Please note that the only collar that should be left on a dog all the time is a flat collar. Other collars should only be used when your dog is on a leash, and they should be used every time you use a leash. If you alternate between a flat collar and a training collar your dog might learn to tell the difference. This can set you back if you want to eventually have off-leash control of your dog.