

COLLAR OR HARNESS?

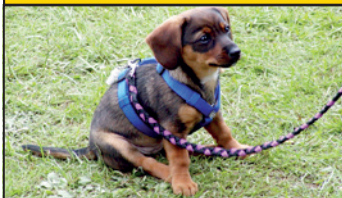
Often annoying, sometimes plain compulsory but basically sensible in view of the many dangers threatened by the traffic on the roads alone... masters and mistresses scarcely venture out of the house without having their dogs on a lead. So where to fix the lead? On a collar or a harness? The experts from the specialist retail chain Maxi Zoo explain which is best suited to which dog.

Most dog owners prefer to fasten their leads to the collars. However, with temperamental dogs that pull on the lead to extremes, this can create problems: enormous pressure is exerted on the very delicate neck area and this, over a period of time, can eventually damage the dog's health. Many owners mistakenly think a dog will stop pulling of its own volition when it feels the pressure. But, as behavioural researchers have discovered, the dog in fact tries to run away from the pain thereby pulling forward even more. That's why it's absolutely essential to train the dog to get used to being on the lead.

THE RIGHT COLLAR

There are a few things to look out for when purchasing a collar. Broad collars are to be recommended made from soft material and with a light fastener. These cover a wider area around the larynx and breathing passages thereby easing the pressure significantly. So-called choke-chains and pinch collars are not suitable as they strangulate the larynx and breathing passages. Sometimes the dog owner has no choice but to resort to a collar – for example, where the dog, for health reasons can't wear a harness as with cases of spondylosis or spinal disorders. Or when there's just no way the dog will accept a harness.

PET POINTERS



with Maxi Zoo

THE HARNESS - GAINING IN POPULARITY

The harness is a good alternative to the collar on physiotherapeutic grounds. It consists of a neck belt and an abdominal belt which are connected together via back and breast bands. If the dog pulls

on the lead, the pressure point is transferred from the sensitive neck area to the rib cage – assuming the harness fits the dog's body properly. It should be made from a soft and nestling material and should be easy to put on. The belts mustn't be so narrow that they cut into the body and the bands shouldn't be able to slide around. Freedom around the armpits is important, i.e. the distance from the front limbs to the breast part must great enough that no chafing can occur when the dog is running. For very young, blustery dogs who like to race around on the lead, you should select a well padded harness. That applies to sporty dogs too, above all if their master or mistress like taking their four-legged friends on cross-country or jogging runs.

HOW DO YOU GET A PUPPY USED TO WEARING A HARNESS OR COLLAR?

Combine the wearing of a harness or collar with something they enjoy. When you want to play with your dog, put the harness on first – ideally you should then reward the dog with food when you finish a period of play. Let it eat with the collar still on but then take it off immediately afterwards.



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