



**FOLLOW THE  
LEADER K9**

## **PRONG COLLAR BASICS**

The prong collar is a type of training collar. A training collar is any collar that when attached to a leash, can be used to effectively communicate direction and boundaries through the way it transmits the tension in the leash to our dog, via the tightening of the collar. Training collars come in a variety of types and sizes, a prong collar is simply one variety. In this handout we will cover some of the benefits of the prong collar as well as some tips to ensure that we are successful in our application of it. Let us begin by first explaining what a prong collar is. The prong collar consists of a series of blunt tipped metal pieces that are linked together around a dog's neck. The sensation of pressure that these metal links provide, allows our dog to clearly ascertain how tight the leash is, and how to respond to such pressure in an appropriate way. It is our hope that by providing this information, we will be better equipped to know if the prong collar is the right training collar for our dog.

### **Prong Collar Benefits**

Here are just some of the benefits that will come from using a prong collar:

- The prong collar is designed in such a way that it does not put excessive pressure directly onto the trachea of the dog like other collars may do.
  - If our dog were to pull or lunge with excessive force, or resist the leash, the prongs will evenly distribute the pressure from the collar around the entirety of our dog's neck rather than on the front of the neck, where the throat is most sensitive.
- The prong collar gives the handler and the dog a very clear channel of communication via the way it tightens and loosens, as well as the sound it makes to be used to reinforce good behaviors.
  - When we pull on the leash or our dog pulls, the prong collar will tighten and make a subtle sound, which will quickly inform our dog that the leash is becoming tight.
  - When we utilize food or toys as a reward for our dog responding properly to the action of the collar, our dog will understand very quickly how to alleviate the leash pressure and receive their reward for responding appropriately.



# PRONG COLLAR BASICS

## Prong Collar Benefits Continued

- The prong collar can give us the ability fade the constant need for treats or toys out of our training system, while still having a dog that will listen to us and perform what we ask of them with heart and soul.
  - By first teaching our dog how to alleviate a low level of pressure on the collar for a reward, we can then fade out the reward and still reinforce the command we are asking of them utilizing the pressure the prong collar provides.
  - We can still reward our dog with food when they are doing great, without having a dog that only listens to us for food, which can have many limitations.
- The prong collar will give us the ability to set clear boundaries with our dog and eliminate potentially dangerous habits of behavior with ease.
  - When we say "no" and then quickly "pop" the prong collar, our dog will learn that when we say "no", we are letting them know that a behavior they are doing is potentially dangerous or may be incompatible with our needs.
  - When we say "no" and then apply constant pressure to the prong collar, only to be alleviated when our dog stops the unwanted behavior, we are letting our dog know that they will not be rewarded for doing what is incorrect.
- When walking our dog in new places with new distractions, we can ensure that the prong collar will give us the leverage needed to safely control them if they become overly excited or distracted and thus keep us both safe.
  - No matter the size or age of the handler, they will be able stay in control despite our dog's power or size.
  - Even when a distraction is presented when we are not expecting it, we will still find ourselves able to safely navigate around it and succeed.

## Prong Collar Tips

Now that we have covered some of the benefits of the prong collar, let's go over some tips to set both us and our dog up for success when using this amazing training tool:

- Always take the time to introduce the prong collar to our dog in a low distraction/stress free environment.
  - After mastering the basics in such a place, slowly introduce distractions in a controlled manner so we and our dog become competent at using the prong collar around controlled distractions.
  - Gradually move on to practice in a variety of new places for short periods of time (5-10 minutes), and always be prepared to leave if either we or our dog become overwhelmed.



# PRONG COLLAR BASICS

## Prong Collar Tips Continued

- When introducing the prong collar, always use a valuable reward and the appropriate words to let our dog know they are doing it right, before ever telling them they are doing it wrong.
  - When our dog responds properly to the collar by engaging with us or moving in the proper direction, tell them the appropriate word "good", "yes", "ok", or "break", and give them the appropriate reward within 1-2 seconds.
  - Only once this basic skill is mastered can we begin to tell them to do commands and then reinforce them by use of the prong collar.
- When starting out, always do prong collar sessions for short periods of time, and gradually work up to longer training sessions as our and our dog's skills progress.
  - If we or our dog become overwhelmed or stressed, end the session and try again at a later time.
  - Sessions may be as short as 2 minutes to start, and can happen from 5-10 times throughout the day, depending on a variety of factors.
- Utilize a variety of leash lengths and types to find the one that works best for us and our dog.
  - A long leash or long line of 10-20 feet may be great for teaching our dog without leading them to feel overly restricted by the collar.
  - A short leash of 3-6 feet can be great for mastering basic commands and can be easier to handle than something of greater length.
  - A pull tab or handle, of 3 inches to 6 inches in length can also be very useful, particularly in later phases of the training process.
- When issuing a correction with the prong collar, let's always ask ourselves these questions to ensure success:
  - Is our dog confused or is it possible did they not hear what we asked of them?
  - Have we taken our dog into a place where the distractions are too numerous or powerful for us to succeed?
  - Do we need to go back to practicing the basic skills and ensure that we are doing everything properly to set our dog up for success?



## PRONG COLLAR BASICS

Thank you for taking the time to read this handout, which covered the benefits of the prong collar and some tips for having success when integrating this tool into our dog's life. Your dog is so lucky to have a human like you who is willing to take the time to educate themselves on such a topic, and thus ensure this tool will lead you both towards accomplishing your training goals; whatever they may be. As always, if you have any questions or need additional support, feel free to reach out to us at Follow The Leader K9, and we will be more than happy to assist you. Remember, "we don't blame them, we train them."