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Should You Correct A Puppy With A Pinch Collar?

By Adam G. Katz

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Hi, Adam!

My husband and I recently purchased a white German Shepherd. She is 12 weeks old today and quite a handful. Sometimes she can be so sweet, but other times she is actually quite vicious.

Well, I don't know if vicious is the right word, but when I tell her "No!" she just gets more agitated and lunges at me with her teeth bared.

I got a small pinch collar since she's a puppy but I have a question as to how it should fit. When I take 2 prongs out it is snug against her neck and I worry about it being too tight. When I only take 1 prong out, it sort of slides down her neck a little bit and she constantly scratches at it and it circles around her neck and doesn't stay put. Which is the right fit?

She is really a handful and I think the pinch collar is a great tool, but I want to make sure it fits right so as not to cause her any discomfort.

You say in the book that you should be able to slide half a finger in there, but I guess I am just confused as to how you should judge the fit.

Please help! I'm afraid my time is running out to get her to start obeying me. She doesn't see me as the Alpha dog quite yet and it is very frustrating to be with her for long periods of time. When I say "Duchess, come" she only comes when she feels like it. With the pinch collar, what is the best way to make sure she comes each time I call her? I don't want to go around yanking on her neck, but at the same time she needs to respect me. Any tips you can give me on making sure she sees me as the boss would be very helpful!

Thanks,
Cassidy

Dear Cassidy:

When I refer to "half a finger space" in regard to the proper fitting of the pinch collar, what I mean is:
– If the average person's finger is ½ inch wide, then there should be approximately ¼ inch of space between the end of the prong and the skin of the dog's neck.

So, why don't I just say, "1/4 inch of space"? Because it's easier to judge by sticking your finger beneath the prong than it is to break out your old high school ruler.

Should You Correct A Puppy With A Pinch Collar?

Many of you (newsletter subscribers) are no doubt wondering why I would recommend a pinch collar for a puppy. And my answer is: I'm not. At least not for most puppies.

But there are some puppies who will not respond to a simple diversion or verbal, "No." They will bite and cause puncture wounds on your legs and arms if they are not corrected for this behavior. So, if you've tried the other methods for dealing with "puppy nipping" that I've outlined in the book, then you'll need to progress to a small pinch collar. (Also described in the book.)

"But aren't they too young for a pinch collar?" you're probably thinking.

The answer is: No.

They ARE too young for formal obedience training. (I.E., Sit, Down, Come, Heel, Stay). [This should start when you see the adult teeth come in... at approximately 4 to 5 months of age.]

But a puppy SHOULD be corrected for biting... if you've found that diverting his attention to a chew toy or another activity is not working.

Why? Because the mother dog would not allow the puppy to bite her. If the pup bites her too hard, she will turn and bite the puppies neck.

From the puppies perspective, THIS HURTS.

But it does not cause damage.

And that's why the puppy chooses not to bite the mama dog any more. Because it doesn't feel good.

This is the same reason that it's okay to correct a puppy for excessively hard biting with the pinch collar. The pinch collar replicates the mama dog.

Trust me on this: I've seen 11 week-old Rottweiler puppies and 10 week-old Jack Russell Terrier puppies who had biten through (literally) their owners fingers with their needle-like teeth. The owners are almost in tears with the idea that they may have to put their puppy to sleep.

They've tried all the nonsense garbage you read in the dog magazines.

Stuff like shrieking in a high-pitched voice. Or putting the puppy in the crate. Or turning your back on the dog. But none of it works on a puppy who is intent on biting down as hard as he can on your soft, human flesh.

Getting back on course... When you correct the puppy, just use common sense. Simply because your car can accelerate up to 140 mph. does not mean that you should or need to drive that fast. The same goes for the pinch collar. If you're an adult and you can employ reason and common sense, then you should be able to tailor the intensity of your correction to appropriately match your dog's temperament.

How do you do this? You test.

If you correct the puppy for biting, then next you should immediately offer him your hand again. If he immediately bites you again... then you now know that your correction wasn't meaningful.

To read more of my dog training ramblings, read about my book (click below): <http://tinyurl.com/4efaq>
Secrets of a Professional Dog Trainer!

Author, "Secrets of a Professional Dog Trainer!" which you can read more about at:<http://tinyurl.com/4efaq>

What Type Of Training Collar To Use On Toy Breeds

By Adam Katz

Should You Correct A Puppy With A Pinch Collar?

Hi,

I just wanted to say that I've been reading much of your book and I can't wait to get started applying your techniques to my two dogs.

(To read about the book and package she's referring to, take a peek at:

)

I've noticed in almost all, if not all, of your training techniques, you mention using a pinch collar for correcting the dog. On page 155 you say that a pinch collar is the best collar to use – with a few exceptions for the toy breeds. Now, both of my dogs are toy breeds: I have a 15 lb. poodle/terrier mix, and a 10 lb. Yorkie. I'm also seriously considering getting a miniature pinscher sometime this summer. So my question is: What do you mean when you say "with a few exceptions for the toy breeds"? Are you saying that a pinch collar should not be used on toy breeds or certain toy breeds? If so, what should I be using on them? They both desperately need training and the pinch collar sounds like something that would give me results.

Cathy

Dear Cathy:

Thanks for the kind words.

The idea is to not get stuck on any one type of training equipment, but rather to use whatever you need to achieve the desired results. In most cases, it's just plain easier to use a slip collar/choke chain with the toy breeds because:

1. Since it's such a small dog you're working with, it's easy to make your corrections motivational if you're doing it the right way. (Tug and release).
2. It's hard to find the mini/micro pinch collars. If you're trying to use the small one, then you've only got one or two prongs in the entire collar – which doesn't really give you enough of to correct with.

In sum, you can use a pinch collar if you get the micro-sized one. They're hard to find, but if you spend about 15 minutes searching the web I'll bet you can locate a supplier. If not, just use a properly sized slip/choke chain.

That's all for now, folks! Adam

Adam G. Katz is the author of the book, "Secrets of a Professional Dog Trainer: An Insider's Guide To The Most Jealously Guarded Dog Training Secrets In History." Get a free copy of his report "Games To Play With Your Dog" when you sign up for his free weekly dog training tips e-zine at:

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