



# Harness Confidence

It's quite common for dogs to find putting a harness on a bit strange. Whether you have a puppy or an adult dog it's important to take some time to help your dog feel comfortable wearing a harness.

## To Play:

1. Get yourself set up with your dog's harness and their favourite snacks.

2. Put the harness behind your back, slowly bring it out and as soon as your dog looks at the harness, mark and throw a treat towards them. Don't move the harness towards them just hold it out at your side.

Do this until your dog starts to show signs of excitement when they see the harness.

3. Next, wait for them to approach rather than just look at it, even if it's just one small step at first. As soon as they do mark and reward by throwing a treat away.

4. When they are happily approaching their harness, start to wait for them to get a little closer each time before rewarding. (This is called shaping!)

**It's really important we don't rush this process, before we ask the dog to stick their head through we need them to think the appearance of the harness is absolutely fantastic.**

5. Our next step is to get them putting their nose inside their harness. Wait until their nose is close to the head hole in the harness before marking and rewarding. Then only reward when their nose is pointing towards the head hole.

6. Now we wait until they're putting their head in a little further each time before rewarding.

7. When they're confidently sticking their head through the hole each time. Start to slowly slip the harness over their head and onto their neck. Then slide it back off, mark and reward. If they back away or show any signs of discomfort, go back a step for a couple of reps.

8. The next step is to gently place the harness onto their back, mark and reward to their mouth this time. Then slide the harness off and repeat until fluid.

9. Now we're ready to do up the clips, slide the harness on, mark and reward to their mouth. Do up one clip at a time and mark and reward to their mouth after each clip.

## Trouble shooting:

If your dog is worried by you holding the harness, start with the harness laid on the floor.

If your dog isn't moving their nose towards the head hole when you get to step five, lay the harness on the floor between you and the dog and work through steps 1 - 6 with the harness on the floor. Instead of throwing the treat away, place a treat in the head hole each time instead of throwing it away.