

## **How To Pick The Right Training Collar For Your Dog**

Many trainers get caught up in using a certain collar or method of training. My philosophy is that each dog is different so I adapt my training according to each dog's personality. Three things are very important when training: (1) that your dog understands why he is being corrected and rewarded and (2) the reward more than makes up for the correction and (3) that the correction immediately stops the unwanted behavior but does not cause the dog to become introverted or afraid. I have written articles on types of collars, reward vs. compulsion and when to praise and correct (please read those articles on this web page). I have explained the different collars and their uses with all of my clients and why I would choose a specific collar for their dog but the questions are always the same: "Will this hurt my dog?". I don't want to hurt anyone's dog, let alone my own dogs, but I need the unwanted behavior to stop immediately to avoid the dog getting into bad habits. Some bad habits may actually hurt the dog (i.e. not coming when called).

I have used and continue to use Nylon Choke Collars, Pinch/Prong Collars, Electric Collars and Bark Collars. Each one has its' own benefits but each one is not appropriate for all dogs. Some dogs may begin on a certain collar and after training or maturing may have to switch to another collar.

The collar I hear the most negative comments about is the Electronic Collar. This collar, I feel, is the least harmful of all the training collars. The Electronic Collar does not choke, it is not physical on the handler's part, it will not mark a dog's neck, the correction is always consistent with each handler in the house, it is not heavy, it can be felt by your dog even if your dog is far away, it is safe to have in the rain or when swimming, has a very light correction and can be 'dialed up' to a harder correction if needed and this collar is reasonably priced. Yes, many owners do not know how to use them or over correct but that is with any collar. I will use it for a dog that is 'leash wise' and knows when he is off the leash; or for a dog that requires a harder correction than I am able to give; and always when I am training for aggression (human or animal) because the correction is never physical. Many times, when training aggression, the dog sees a leash correction as the handler getting physical and may retaliate against the handler for such. With the Electric correction, I am only pressing a button; therefore, my mannerisms are very calm. If I am calm when a dog is being aggressive then the dog will naturally calm down, if I am loud or physical, it will encourage the dog that he needs to be loud and physical. The dog may become aggressive with me at that point or take it out on the other animal in retaliation for the correction.