

Shock, Prong, Choke Collars: Hazardous to Health

Every time someone uses a painful collar on a dog, they are physically and emotionally hurting who they are obligated to protect. This is a betrayal, not only to the dog, but to every other person who spends their time trying to rescue and save dogs from harm. If you use a shock, prong or choke collar and don't know the harm you are causing, please read on. When you jerk, snap, yank or pull your dog, most people don't know just how much force they exert that is adversely affecting a dog's health and well-being. Since everything is connected, damage to the neck will cause problems in the back, limbs, head, eyes, and organs. The research leaves no doubt that most dogs equipped with these collars will sustain injuries. Not only physical injury, but psychological damage as well. Studies show aggressive behaviours in dogs can result from the pain they are experiencing, and repeated corrections only make matters worse. Confining dogs in crates restricts their movements and worsens the pain and muscular tension they are suffering. Do not dismiss it when dogs resist being crated. Forcing a dog into a crate is tantamount to abuse.



Some people claim it is the misuse and overuse of the various collars that cause injuries, but that argument ignores the fact that shock, choke and prong collars are intended to cause discomfort and pain. Their appearances and names say it all. Even small tugs and lower intensity shocks can cause significant trauma. Research shows it's not if there will be damage but how much damage will occur. Your dog will sustain an injury, whether you can see it or not. It's almost guaranteed. Sadly, pet owners are rarely warned about the dangers of these devices by sellers and aversive balanced trainers.

Chiropractic studies (Hallgren/Sweden) have found 91% of dogs with spinal injuries had histories of being pulled and jerked on leads. If you tug and yank on a choke, prong and even a flat collar, or shorten the leash to the point it is applying constant pressure on the dog's neck, this will produce sprains, bruising, or much worse. Owners and trainers often ignore, miss, or dismiss the telltale signs of pain and discomfort as minor, even though these signs can indicate extreme injury and can even lead to death. Many of the damaging effects of collars are invisible.

Potential effects of harsh collar handling:

- Difficulty holding head erect
- Front or hind leg paralysis, limping or hopping
- Difficulty swallowing or breathing
- Fainting / collapse
- Swollen or protruding eyes
- Excessive panting or drooling
- Whining / yelping
- Urine dribbling / leaking
- Reluctance to move
- Limited or stiff neck and head movement
- Aggression, agitation
- Voice Hoarseness
- Withdrawn / Shut down
- Injured ocular vessels
- Collapsed Tracheal and Laryngeal nerve paralysis
- Esophageal damage
- Sprained or crushed neck bones
- Whiplash
- Nerve damage
- Anxiety, stress & trauma
- Misalignment of the cervical vertebrae
- Depression / Phobias
- Compromised Immune System
- Thyroid damage
- Tissue damage
- Infection
- Undermined trust & bonding

Older dogs in poor health are even more vulnerable. For safe and humane dog training, most experts, such as vets, behaviourists, and positive trainers, recommend using harnesses instead of collars. Remember, there is a living being at the other end of that leash with many of the same emotions and nerve endings as you have. Just because these collars are legal doesn't mean using them is ethical or safe; lawful, but awful. There is no safer, more effective and fun way for any animal to be trained than with positive reinforcement methods.



Photo credit: Raise Awareness Across the Globe:

Note: This device is as cruel as it looks. Those who understand its cruel purpose can now camouflage their prong collars with covers to make them appear as normal flat collars. This undertaking implies knowledge, and perhaps shame for using such a device.

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