

THE RIGHT HARNESS GUIDE FOR YOUR DOG

Learn about:

- Why not all harnesses are the same
- How poorly designed harnesses can impact your dog
- Picking the right harness



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An inappropriate, ill fitted harness can do so much harm to your dog!

Imagine wearing something that:

- Makes you feel uncomfortable
- Doesn't allow you to move freely
- Causes unpleasantness
- Just doesn't sit right on your body!

Without the right harness, dogs are likely to:

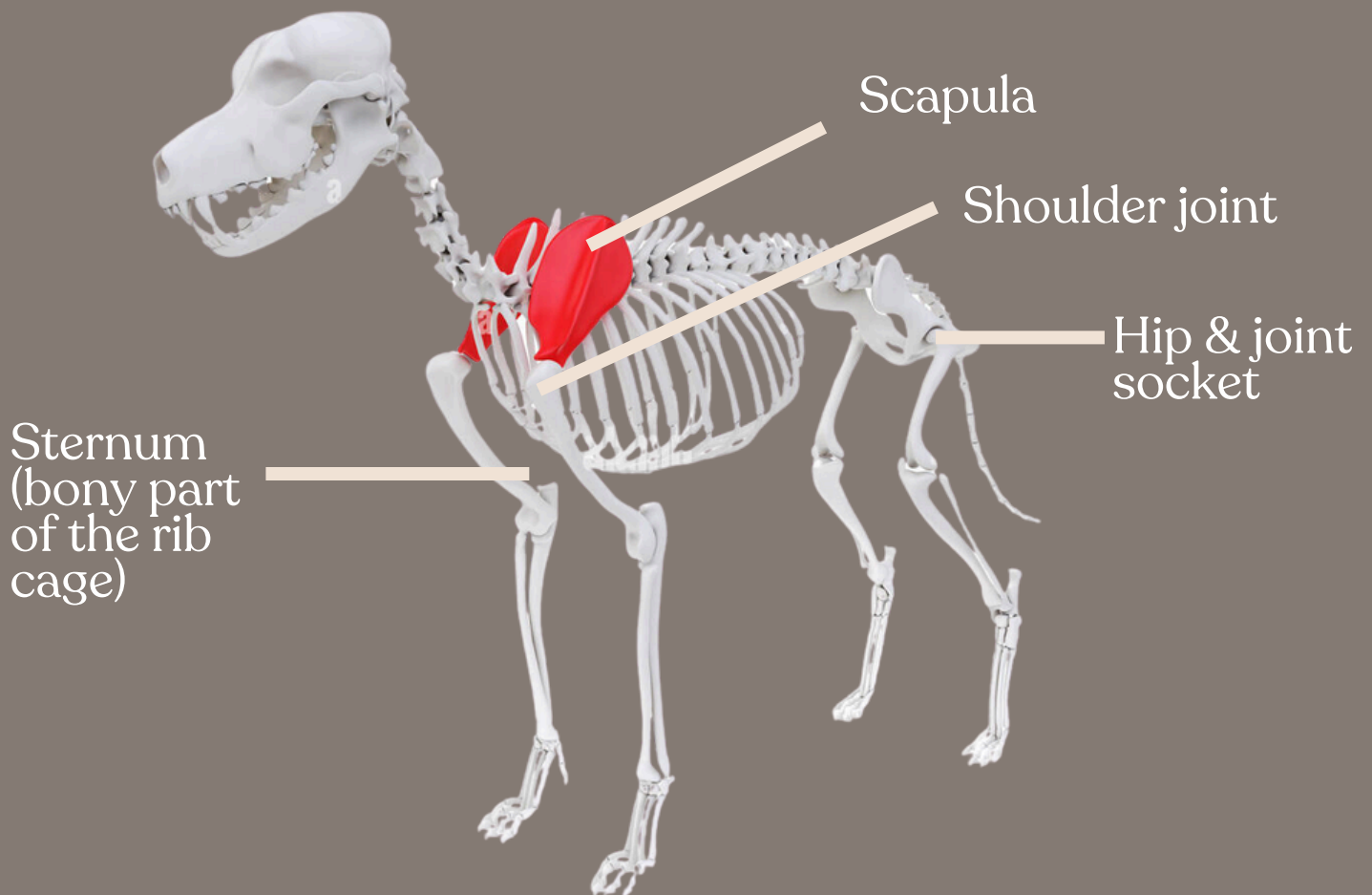
- Find walks unpleasant
- Pull more because of the stress of wearing poor equipment
- Wriggle out of their harness



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Understanding the canine body:



Unlike the hind legs which are connected by hip & joint sockets, the scapula is attached to the fore limb by only muscles

Image of dog skeletal system sourced from Google Images

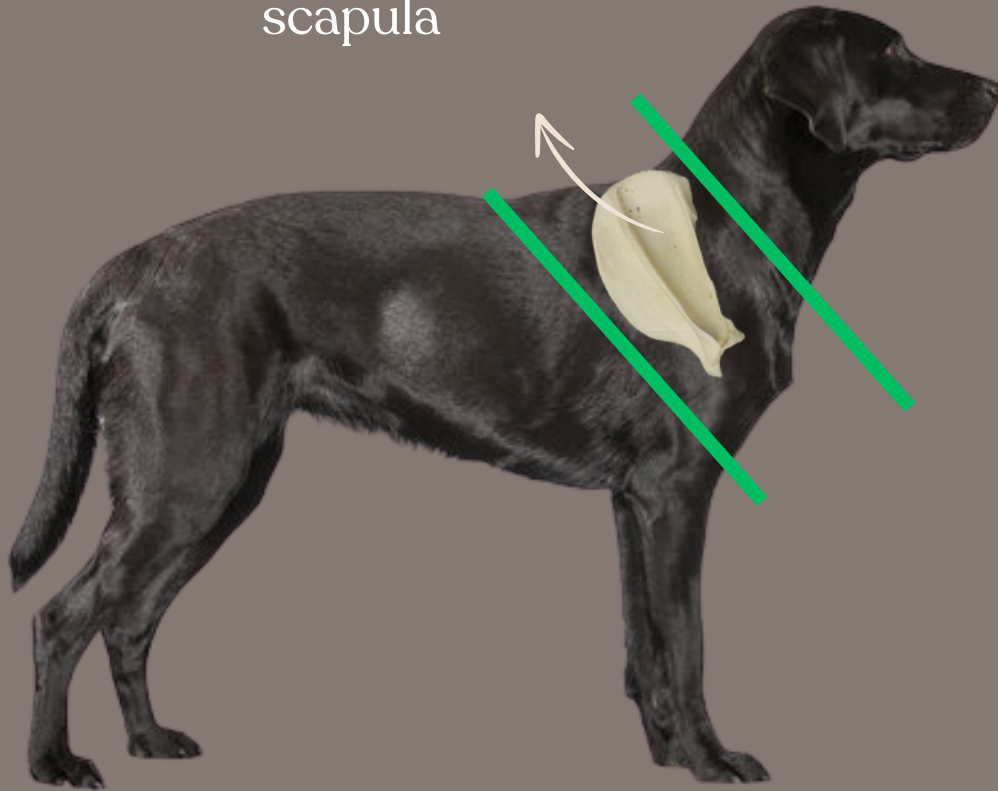


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Understanding the canine body:

Your dog's
scapula



Dogs use need full shoulder movement while they are walking, not the limb.

An anatomically suited harness will not restrict this part of the body and will allow full range of motion.



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Let's look at a few examples of restrictive harnesses:



Do you see how the harness strap is placed on the shoulder?

This can be restrictive for the dog in moving their shoulder fully.



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Let's look at a few examples of restrictive harnesses:



This is a great example of a restrictive harness.

Not only is it cutting across the shoulder but it's also not sitting well across the chest.

Walking in a harness like this can be extremely uncomfortable.



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Let's look at a few examples of restrictive harnesses:



The continuous restriction movement over a period of time can cause muscle damage and altering of the dog's movement to accommodate the restriction.

This eventually can lead to a build up of chronic muscular discomfort & pain



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Let's look at a few examples of restrictive harnesses:



This vested harness is blocking off key joints that facilitate movement from the dog.

This can also significantly heat up a dog and may add to the discomfort.



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Criteria for a good harness:

Based on entirely how a dog naturally moves, here's a list of things that all anatomically sound harnesses will have:

- * **They will stay off the scapula** – because that's where the dog's movement originates from
- * **It will stay on the sternum** – this is the hard part of the bone that's in the middle of the rib cage
- * **It will stay off the shoulder joint in front** – this is the hard part of the bone that's in the middle of the rib cage
- * **The clip for the leash should be sitting on the back of the harness and not on the front**



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So what's the right harness choice?

My preference is for a **Y shaped or H harness**, as they are commonly known as.



Neck is free

Shoulder movement is not restricted

Harness sits well on the sternum/check

Lower belt sits on the belly and doesn't restrict elbow joint

Ideally, the harness would sit in a more V shape than this rounded shape - that has to do with the ring used on the front of the harness. A D-shaped ring v/s a round ring is more likely to give you that V shape, which allows the harness to sit better



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These look like an H harness but are not:



Sits very close to the neck; ideally this would have a ring in the middle to hold the front straps better



Strap is sitting on the shoulder joint; this is also an extremely ill fitted harness



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These look like an H harness but are not:



Strap needs to sit higher

Very close to the 'arm pits' that can cause chafing as the harness keeps moving against the skin

Things to keep in mind while picking out a harness:

1. Choose an H or Y shaped harness
2. Ensure that it's well fitted - dogs can still wriggle out of an H harness if it's not the appropriate size for them
3. Vested harnesses - some dogs might find them pleasant; some may not - if they meet other criteria, try it on your dog & see what their preference is



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Other things to keep in mind while picking out a harness:

- Material of the harness – is it soft and comfortable?
- The bulkiness of locks on the harness – this should be light and sturdy
- Should fit snugly on your dog – breed sized recommendations on harnesses made by brands may not be appropriate for your dog!

Poor equipment can impact your dog and their behaviour in multiple ways. Make sure they are walking the right harness to avoid heartache!

www.luchiandmuttons.com

surabhi@luchiandmuttons.com



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