

THE "LAST RESORT" ARGUMENT FOR SHOCKING ANIMALS

As inflicting pain on animals becomes increasingly difficult to justify, proponents of shock devices steadfastly stand by the 'last resort' defense, claiming that shock devices are necessary when an animal cannot be trained in any other way. Questions that beg to be answered include whom makes this call, what standards should be strived for, and at what point are all other methods considered exhausted? Does the person exhausting all these methods have the credentials and skills to employ all other methods effectively? Are they knowledgeable about the breed they are working with? Have they provided a full medical exam of the animal prior to engaging in all these methods to determine if the animal is in any pain? Has the animal's history, current living conditions, diet and present caregivers been examined carefully for a possible cause of the disruptive behaviours? When this person fails to achieve any viable results, is at least one other qualified professional consulted? If a child was acting out, would a method as extreme and cruel as electric shock even be considered?



This puppy was fitted with a shock collar & choke chain at a training school. Does he look like a hard case to you?

The notion that shock collars should be used in last resort cases is in itself testament to the fact that shocking any sentient being is an extreme measure, dangerous and risky. The "last resort" excuse is a weak effort to defend the indefensible. The argument is flimsy, and conveniently ignores the fact that shock collars are routinely sold to anybody, for any reason, with no questions asked. It is a sad fact that shock collars are promoted for use on every breed of dog regardless of temperament, age or size and for reasons as trivial as teaching a pup to sit on command. This is reckless indifference at best. If your mother had punched you in the stomach every time she didn't approve of your behaviour, the probability is high your behaviour would change. Conceivably, so would your feelings towards your mother and how you reacted to everyone else in the world.

Your confidence and trust in others would be seriously eroded. This brings to mind a little pup I ran across while walking my dog at a local park. He was a four-month-old Beagle with a shock collar fixed around his neck, still on leash, and a 13-year-old boy in command of the control and leash. When I reached down to pat the pup he submissively sank into the ground while curling up in a ball. The boy said his father bought the collar so he wouldn't lose the dog. We asked, if he or his father had instruction on how to use the shock collar and he said he didn't think so. Last resort situation?

How unjustified would the use of electric shock be on a dog with difficulty concentrating or processing language? How would these difficulties be distinguished from what a trainer labels as a stubborn headstrong dog? Most dog trainers just don't have the expertise to do complex diagnosis. Some dogs hear a command but have difficulty processing it due to age, stress or injury. There are many reasons a dog may not respond as quickly as one would want. In such cases, impatient owners would discharge a shock before a dog had time to react. This causes further disobedience as confusion and anxiety overwhelms the dog and all he wants to do is escape. The claim that some breeds have such a high pain threshold that they aren't bothered by high intensity shocks is just more baseless rhetoric that many shock promoters spout. They insist certain breeds are naturally suited to shock training because of their toughness and high tolerance to pain. If the so-called tough dog does show signs of pain the shock trainer blows it off as 'the dog is a sissy or playing you for a sucker'.



Let's face it; torture is not a teaching method. It is torture. Any behaviour change resulting from torture is not healthy change. It also needs to be recognized that the behaviour issues of a so-called "last resort" dog, are likely the result of neglect and abuse in the first place. Further harsh treatment will do nothing positive to help rebuild the dog's confidence and trust.

The argument is, that if shock collars aren't permitted for 'last resort' dogs then euthanasia is the only option left. This is a scare tactic used by shock enthusiasts to play on people's conscience. Countless, beautiful healthy animals are put down everyday, all over the world, because there is nobody to take care of them. There are injured dogs and cats put down because nobody wants to pay their vet bills. There are dogs and cats living in squalid conditions because nobody cares. There are well-behaved animals put down because shelters are full and they have to make room for more unwanted animals. So, how sincere is this concern by shock profiteers for the life of the 'last resort' dog? Sad to say, but sometimes the only mercy or relief for an animal abused by humans is to die. No, it is not concern for an animal's well being that leads to the use of shock. It is viewing animals as products.

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Ban Shock Collar Advocates