HARNESSES FOR MANTRAILING

A harness for mantrailing is a specific item of equipment – be aware that not all harnesses are suitable for the job. As with all dog accessories, there is a very large selection of harnesses to choose from. Not only are there numerous manufacturers but each manufacturer may offer several lines of harnesses, from 'economy' through to 'premier' styles and makes.

When choosing a harness, the first point to make is that your dog is an individual. Therefore, the make and style that suits one cocker spaniel for example may not be the best fit for your cocker spaniel.

In general terms, what you are seeking is the most comfortable and durable harness in your price range for your dog. This handout covers a few examples of harnesses with price indications to help guide you.

At Mantrailing Scent Dogs, we advise that you consider the following points before deciding which mantrailing harness to purchase for your dog.

Chestpad

The harness must have a large chest pad or, alternatively, a one-piece strap that is flexible and soft enough to mould to the chest of the dog. This is important as the chest pad or plate is where most of the force created by the dog trailing is focused. A well-fitting chest pad will spread the pressure away from the chest and through the straps to the line. Done properly this will allow the dog to work for long periods without encountering difficulty with a harness that rides ups and constricts its breathing or rubs causing discomfort.



Above are two examples of typical dog harnesses. The one on the left is well shaped and broad fitting across the dog's chest and is cut to stay clear of the dog's armpits. The right-hand example has a very narrow strap running along the dog's sternum and close to the armpits so the pressure will be concentrated on narrow areas which will quickly cause any dog mantrailing in such a harness discomfort and potentially injury.

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Easy to fit and adjustable harness



As a Mantrailing Handler, you will be putting the harness on and taking it off frequently, so consider whether the design is one that you find easy to fit. In general, parachute clips are quicker than buckles – especially when cold and wet!



A design that is straightforward to adjust and that allows a high degree of adjustment will allow you, through trial and error, to achieve the 'bespoke' result that will best suit your dog rather than the 'one size fits all' of less adjustable harnesses.

Security



The harness must remain secure, it should never start to loosen or break whilst your dog is trailing.



The harness should be constructed with a material incorporating high visibility and reflective properties so your dog will be easily visible to other pedestrians or traffic on roads, day or night.

Attachment for line

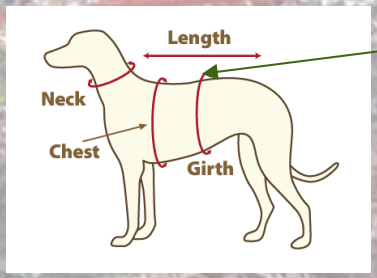
Look at the location and design of the attachment for your line to the harnesses. Many designs use a 'D' ring for this.



Generally, it is better if the location of the ring is on the rear half to third of your dog's back. Some dogs maybe sensitive to the presence of anything on their back so you may need to spend time acclimatising them to wearing the harness and the attachment of the line.



As an alternative to a 'D' ring some manufacturers offer a lanyard attachment to the harness which allows the line greater manoeuvrability. This may reduce unintended checks and drag affecting the dog whilst working.



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Cleaning

Consider how easy the harness is to clean and how quickly will it dry after a day in the mud and rain. Heavy leather harnesses can be a problem when used in this weather.

Information on leading harness manufacturers

As with most products, the more you pay the more you get. Decide how much you want to pay, then look for the harness that best meets the above criteria and your budget. Few harnesses are UK made. Use the following information on the typical styles available, gather opinions from your fellow mantrailers then go online to research alternatives and find the best deals.

Prices are correct at time of writing. Please contact us for updated information when you are considering purchasing your harness. We can often point you in the direction of clients who already have these harnesses so you can get an opinion and potentially try on for sizing prior to purchasing.

Zero DC Harnesses http://www.zerodc.cz



The Zero DC Long or Short Canicross harnesses can be used for mantrailing and are a good budget choice. Although less adjustable than some harnesses, they come in a large range of colours and sizes XS to XXXL. The web site provides a measurement guide to enable you to size it correctly for your dog. Priced at around £36.99 there are number of online suppliers so prices are keen.

Other sites which sell the same harnesses include:
https://dogfit.co.uk/products/zero-dc-short-canicross-harness

https://sportypaws.co.uk At the time of writing, this site provides an exclusive discount to Mantrailing Scent Dogs clients. Please contact us for the code if you wish to buy the Zero DC harnesses so you can compare pricing prior to purchasing your harness.

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K9.LV www.k-9.lv



Constructed from a webbing style material derived from the design of leather trailing harnesses. Examples I have seen were well made and light weight. Large dog sizes M – L – XL and small dog or puppy sizes XS – S priced at 69 Euros all sizes. Currently, no high visibility features.

These harnesses may be more suited for wide chested dogs such as beagles. As with any of these harnesses, it is recommended that you find the correct fit for your particular dog.

Julius K9 www.julius-k9.com



Julius supplies several basic harnesses in this country. The harness in the picture is marketed as a mantrailing harness and based on the Grossenbacher below. Sizing is limited to M and combined L/XL although it appears to be adjustable. Priced at 152 Euro.

Grossenbacher https://grossenbacher-beat.ch

Grossenbacher produce a wide range of harnesses. The two below are the most suitable for mantrailing:



Mantrailing Harness



Funrun Harness

Grossenbacher offers a size range from XXS – 3XL, with prices between 82 and 117 Euro.

Grossenbacher are based in Switzerland, so direct delivery can be lengthy. At Mantrailing Scent Dogs we have a UK Distributor who offers our clients a 25% discount – please contact us for the details.

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