



# Dog Harnesses For Toy Breeds - A Smart and Stylish Choice

For those of us who own toy breeds, the frightening sounds of coughing, shallow breathing or in the extreme, listening to your tiny Maltese honk like a barnyard goose may be all too familiar. Most often these symptoms result from an irritated, or in more severe cases, a collapsed trachea. Although these symptoms are unnerving to those new dog owners who are not familiar with this ailment, it is a fairly common one. Estimates range that between 20-40% of toy breed dogs will develop some sort of tracheal disorder. The highest risk breeds are among our tiniest canine companions: Chihuahuas, Yorkshire Terriers, Pomeranians, Italian Greyhounds, Maltese, and Toy Poodles.

If your little dog occasionally exhibits these symptoms, you may notice that a tug on your dog's collar, while out for a walk, may suddenly bring them on. [kingcock strap on](#) is important to understand that tracheal disorders are congenital. A tug on a collar rarely, if ever will cause a collapsed trachea. However it can certainly exacerbate an already existing problem or turn a predisposition into the problem. Tugging on a collar can easily cause the irritation that leads to coughing, which in turn, further irritates the trachea.

So, whether you are trying to curb the energy and exuberance of your new puppy friend, take control of your dog in unsafe situations, or just take your pup out to answer nature's call, harnesses are the perfect choice for toy breed dogs. Designed to allow your dog to push with the chest rather than the throat, a properly fitted harness removes pressure from your tiny dog's sensitive trachea. Even for small dogs without tracheal concerns, harnesses are best because they distribute pressure more evenly around the dog's body, and are therefore much more comfortable. For "Houdini" hounds, harnesses provide an escape proof alternative to the classic collar that can sometimes allow your dog to pull its head back through it. Toy breed dog collars should be worn to look wonderful and to hold tags only, not for leash attachment.

Once you have made the decision to shop for a harness, there are a myriad of harnesses to choose from. Unfortunately, for the first-time harness buyer, it's like trying to buy athletic underwear - for someone else! I have talked to numerous little dog owners who can pull a harness that didn't work out of the back of the closet. Too often, what starts off with the best

intentions, ends up being an exercise in frustration. But, like anything you want to feel good about and have for a while, acquiring the right harness takes some planning.

At Moondoggie, Inc. we offer the following advice to our toy breed customers:

**TAKE 3 MEASUREMENTS** - around your dog's neck, along the length of your dog's back (topline) from where the collar lays to the base of your dog's tail, and around the biggest part of your dog (girth) which is usually just behind the front legs. **ADD 2 inches** to the girth measurement.

**THINK COMFORT** - Avoid harnesses that have pressure spots where they can rub and irritate your dog's skin. Nylon and some unfinished leathers have a tendency to do that. Choose soft fabrics that "breathe". 100% cotton, or soft, porous, semi-stretch, neoprene blends are great because they are machine washable and dry quickly. If leather is what you want, try rounded or "tubular" leather, and although it may be a bit more expensive, purchase a buttery soft leather dog harness. It will last forever, continue to soften with age, and look fabulous!