

Questions to Ask about Prong Collar Claims

If someone creates a diagram purporting to show the forces on a prong collar or makes a claim about the forces in an argument, ask them these questions.

1. Which of the (at least) four main force scenarios involving a prong collar does this diagram represent or argument apply to? If they don't know, this tells you a lot.
2. If they can identify which force scenario they are talking about, ask them to kindly post diagrams of the other possible force scenarios or describe the mathematics involved. Ask them to discuss how these forces combine and interact with each other. Why did they show only one of the many possibilities? And did they even identify which one it was?
3. Ask them what orientation of the collar on the dog's neck the diagram represents. Is the leash attachment area on the right side of the dog's neck, as directed by many trainers, or on the back of the neck, as many lay people use it? If they are claiming that the prong collar "protects the dog's trachea" when the attachment is in the back, ask them what happens when the attachment area is rotated by 90 degrees.
4. Ask them if they are treating the forces as a statics problem or a dynamics problem. Whichever it is, ask them to explain the other types of forces on the collar.
5. If they have created a two-dimensional drawing, ask them what margin of error this approximation introduces since leashes attached to collars create forces in three dimensions.

Bonus Question

If someone states that the prong units are acting as levers, ask what class of lever they are: class 1, 2, or 3? Ask them if they are aware that levers increase force and whether they have calculated how much *more* force is on the dog's neck because of the operation of the levers.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that there are multiple types of forces involved with prong collar use. Anyone who reduces this to one diagram or makes a general claim about the force of a prong collar is not someone who is educated about forces, or possibly has no idea how prong collars are used. This amounts to the same thing since the use must be thoroughly understood to analyze forces.