



Teething and Chewing

All puppies chew and it is essential to provide safe things for them. You need to direct their chewing to acceptable objects and away from family possessions. Firstly you have to provide a variety of safe toys until you find the ones that s/he likes. It is important to supply chewables that are not similar to your possessions e.g. do not give your dog an old shoe or sock.

The next step is to actively reinforce chewing on the toys. Therefore making it more rewarding than chewing on anything around the house. Always give your pup happy verbal praise whenever it is chewing on one of its toys.

Puppies usually stop excessive chewing by 5-6 months of age.

If you see your dog chewing your possessions, do not give the behaviour your attention, but distract your dog away from it. If your dog targets an item repeatedly, use a non toxic taste that your puppy doesn't like. You can buy products from your pet shop. However try them out on your puppy before relying on it as puppy's tastes are as individual as humans. Also remember to reapply regularly. Some dogs chew due to boredom so ensure that your dog has adequate physical and mental stimulation. Dogs occasionally chew when distressed, e.g. when there is conflict in their family or separation anxiety. When this is the case it is necessary to eliminate this problem first.

Advice on Mouthing

Puppies naturally learn bite inhibition with their litter mates. They constantly chew on each other in play and learn how much pressure from their jaws causes pain. The yelping response from their litter mates is the exact feedback they need. However dog owners do not give this feedback and the puppy may not learn an important socialisation message. Therefore if your puppy mouths you it is important to react to it by emitting a yelp or a correction noise (e.g. growl, or a firm "no" or "a,a"). If your puppy mouths you when it gets over excited e.g. when playing, yelp or use a correction noise and walk away discontinuing playtime. Ignore your puppy until it has calmed down. If you use excessive punishment it could cause your puppy to fear you, or cause defensive aggression.

Please ask for separate advice sheet on mouthing.