
CHEWING

All dogs chew.

This is a normal and necessary part of every dog's life. Puppies between the ages of 2 and 6 months chew to relieve the pain of teething. Dogs, in particular young dogs, are very oral when investigating new items. Young dogs, up to a year, also chew for teething reasons even though their permanent teeth are in. This is because they have not fully set in the root and it relieves them to chew.

Some dogs start to chew all of a sudden because of dental problems. A trip to the veterinarian will take care of dental chewing, What starts out as a dental problem or investigator chewing can soon become a habit

There are a variety of other reasons why dogs chew: from the dog being bored to having fun to relieving stress. The problem is not a dog that chews but what the dog chews. The problem occurs when the dog chews the couch or your shoes instead of his chew toys.

Until the dog proves he will chew only acceptable items, he should not be given free run of the house without supervision. The dog should be confined to limit the damage to your items or to himself. Remember, though, that confinement is not the cure to ill appropriate chewing. Breaking the habit is essential and is a preventative measure that must be taken to prevent destructive chewing. Confinement also need not be permanent. It should only be used until the dog is trained to chew acceptable items only. Time and prevention will allow your dog to earn his way out of confinement. To help speed up the process, chew toys should be left in the confinement area.

Some dogs are very particular about the items they chew on. Instead of buying tons of the same type of chew toy, buy only one of a few different types of toys and see which ones your dog likes Once you see what your dog likes, buy more. That way you will not expect your dog to use something he does not like to chew on. Once you discover the toys he prefers, lay them out for him in the house.

Chew toys to avoid

Rawhide bones: Many are made with ingredients that are unhealthy for consumption and should be avoided.

Animal bones: Animal bones can splinter and cause internal damage to your dog.

Acceptable chew toys

Rope bones: Also known as floss toss toys, these are enjoyable to most dogs and clean their teeth while the dog is chewing

Nyla bones: Nyla bones are hard and are great for teething dogs. Large Nyla bones are good for large breed dogs.

Booda Velvets: These are corn starch based and are safe and digestible.

Rewarding good habits

The single most important thing you can do to teach a dog to chew appropriate items is rewarding the dog when he chews acceptable items. A lot of people believe their dogs don't like chew toys because the dog doesn't pay attention to them. Just buying a lot of chew toys and presenting them to your dog is not enough. Teach the dog that playing with chew toy is fun and makes you happy. Praise should be lavished on the dog every time the dog approaches and picks up the chew toy. Make the chew toy part of your play sessions, get inventive, tie a string to the chew dog and induce your dog to chase and pick it up. Make the chew toy more appealing. A good way to keep your dog's attention on a toy is to get a

hollow type of toy like a Kong all d place a tasty treat inside. This will give your dog hours of chewing fun

You may want to teach your dog to look for chew toys while playing with your dog with the chew toys, put it behind the couch or under a chair and instruct your dog to "find it." When your dog retrieves the chew toy, lavish praise and attention on the dog. The purpose of this exercise is to teach the dog to look for his chew toy even though one is not in immediate sight.

When he does wrong

Many owners come home to find that their dog has chewed something inappropriate. They angrily call the dog over to show him what he did wrong. Many times the dog will approach you, head down, tail down, body close to the ground, showing all the classic signs of being guilty. We then reprimand him because "he knows" he did wrong. Dogs don't understand the concept of guilt or doing things out of spite--these are human concepts, not a dog's. If her s acting "guilty", it's because he's reacting to the tone of your voice. If the dog is not reliable being left alone with free run of the house, he shouldn't have free run of the house.

If your dog has chosen a particular item to chew on that is not acceptable, you may try booby-trapping that particular item with something that the dog finds distasteful. Hot sauce or a common product like Bitter Apple might do the job. But *the* solution still lies in teaching the dog to choose acceptable items to chew on.