

## How Do I Stop My Dog CHEWING!

Many owners complain of their dog or pup chewing either on them or everything that comes to hand. THIS IS QUITE NORMAL BEHAVIOUR! Your dog learns valuable skills from chewing. In addition, it exercises the jaws and helps with teething. It is an important part of the dog language and how it communicates and socializes with its peers. If you've ever watched dogs play, most of the interaction is chase and chew.

You are now the dog's peer, so it is treating you as it would another dog. We don't have fur to protect our skin so we need to direct that chewing on to an article that can't feel pain! For example: a knotted rope, old teddy or squeaky toy. When your dog goes to chew your hand, clothing or any undesirable object, distract the pup with the article using movement and then praise when it does respond and play.

When you live with a dog (especially a pup) you must reorganize your thinking as you would with a toddler in the house. Everybody automatically places breakables out of reach from young children, but few people think the same for their pup. Don't assume it won't chew because it hasn't yet! Come down to their eye level and see what looks inviting. Eg phone cords, plastic plant pots, shoes, socks, kids toys etc. Think like a dog not a human.

If you can catch the pup in the act of destruction, go to the pup and punish him. Say NO and re-direct onto something suitable (like a chew toy) then when your pup starts chewing on HIS toy, you can praise him. If you find the damage already done, bad luck, lie in wait until next time. You can't punish the pup after the act has been committed, only if you catch them in the act.

However, if your pup has destroyed something, still take it away and do not leave it as a chew toy. This will only convince the pup that this is a suitable chew toy. Make sure your pup does not have too many toys as this will confuse them into thinking that EVERYTHING is fair game. Have 2-3 inside toys and 2-3 outside toys only (preferable indestructible). A chew rope is great to chew on, play with and clean your pup's teeth at the same time. You can also make your pup a toy box and teach him that only the things in the toy box are for him to play with.

A bored dog will create far more damage than one that is active and engaged in learning activities such as training. You must provide a dog with chew toys to help teething and ease boredom. Fresh raw meaty bones (chicken wings and necks are good) are what most pups like to chew on, and so will yours if you provide them.

You can also get liquids that can be painted on like Tabasco or Bitter bite to prevent the pup from chewing, but be aware that some pups will enjoy the above solutions so a taste test is needed before you begin.