

Biting Down on Chewing



Learning Shouldn't Hurt

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Chew Toys vs. Play Toys

"Play toys are fun, chew toys are edible." says Sarah Anderson, CPDT, of Dogz Inc. "Some toys can be both, but when you're dealing with a teething puppy, get chew toys, you want it to taste better than the furniture."

CHEW TOYS:

Bully Sticks: Bully sticks are all-natural beef chew toys that are highly digestible and low in fat.

Choo Hooves: Choo hooves are cow hooves, trimmed and cleaned. They are completely natural, no chemicals or preservatives added.

Antlers: Deer and elk antlers are a clean, odorless, non-staining, non-greasy treat to keep active chewers busy. The antlers will not crumble or splinter and harm your dog.

Nylabones: Nylabones are made from pure virgin nylon. They are strong and durable. They will not splinter or break off in chunks

BOTH CHEW AND PLAY:

Kongs: Kong makes durable, tough toys that can be stuffed with food or treats to encourage chewing

Pet Stages: The toys labeled as "chewing" are based on your dog's developmental needs. They are durable, work like a teething ring, or can be frozen to alleviate the pain of teething.

What NOT to Chew on:

Bones: Turkey, chicken and pork are the worst. They can be chewed into sharp splinters that can cut your dog's esophagus or intestines

Wood: Wood can splinter or lodge in the intestines, causing a huge vet bill or even death.

"Old" Shoes, Socks or Towels: If you don't want your dog chewing on your "good" stuff, don't give them old things as toys

Children's Toys: There are button eyes and noses that can be swallowed or choked on.

Why Dogs Chew

Dogs chew for many reasons but the most common is because they are teething. Just like babies, teething can be a painful and uncomfortable process. When a puppy is teething, it is important to teach them the RIGHT things to chew on, otherwise they could develop destructive behaviors in the future.

Puppy Chewing Stages

STAGE 1: 3 weeks old to 6 weeks old

As new puppy parents, we miss this stage. This is where your puppy cuts his "milk teeth". The new teeth erupt to make the transition from nursing to solid food. These are the needle sharp teeth your puppy has when you first bring them home. The good news is that your puppy will lose ALL of these teeth as they mature.

STAGE 2: 3 months to 6 months old

This is the stage most of us are familiar with. Your new puppy is chewing on EVERYTHING. They are losing their milk teeth and cutting their adult teeth. Adult teeth are wider and not as sharp, thank goodness! This stage is characterized by chewing and mouthing on EVERYTHING much like a teething infant. You may see spots of blood on chew toys and objects, but there is nothing to worry about, it just means they lost another tooth. This is the point where we need to fixate our puppies on the RIGHT chew toys so they don't go after the wrong ones!

STAGE 3: 6 months to 1 year

This is the last and perhaps the most difficult of the teething stages. Your cute little puppy now looks like an adult dog. Dogs can cut their molars up until around 9 months old. Chewing can become a habit and, in some breeds, last up to the first year. This is the most destructive of the teething stages. With their big adult dog teeth and jaws, instead of chewing *on* things, they're chewing *through* them!



Chewing Solutions

When you are working with a chewer, carry one of the dog's chew toys with you at all times. There should always be 3-5 toys available in whatever area your dog is in. If you see the dog chewing on something they shouldn't, say "AH AH" and take the object away, replacing it with a chew toy. Know the difference between chew toys and play toys.

As soon as the dog begins to chew on his toy, praise him. "Oh, that's a good dog, you got your toy!" goes a long way in teaching your dog what is good for him to chew on. If you see your dog chewing on their own toy, give lots of praise! The more attention they get for good behavior, they will exhibit fewer bad behaviors to gain attention.

If there are certain objects your dog is drawn to like wood, electrical cords, or shoes, you can use a chew deterrent like Bitter Break or Bitter Apple. The secret to being successful with a chew deterrent is to spray it once directly into the dog's mouth. In small doses the dog may lick it off, but once they've had an overwhelming taste, they're unlikely to try it again! Retreat the object every day for at least a week to reinforce how horrible it tastes. Always remember to replace the object with a proper chew toy and PRAISE!!!

