

## **CHEWING - PUPPIES LOVE IT!!**

Our responsibility is not to prevent puppy from chewing, but to give the pup appropriate toys to chew and play with. After all, it is much easier to teach a dog what to chew than what not to chew.

To help avoid destructive chewing, give your puppy a choice of good, indestructible toys to chew on -a good rubber ball (large enough so that it can't be swallowed) or a tough rubber bone. Don't give your puppy real bones - cooked or uncooked - as these can splinter and tear his mouth or intestinal tract. Your puppies teeth are still developing, and hard items such as bones can damage his growing chompers. Giving your puppy old shoes will often cause him to think that all shoes are available for chewing enjoyment, and puppies always seem to select expensive things to chew. Help your puppy avoid chewing on the wrong things by keeping them out of reach and by keeping the right things to chew readily available.

To make new toys more attractive, play games with them when you first bring them home, and a good idea is to make a toy box for your pup that contains all of the toys so that he can pick which toy he wants to play with when he feels frisky. Whenever your pup starts to chew on an unacceptable object, say NO firmly, take the forbidden object away and present him with a suitable toy, making it seem like it is so much more fun by playing with it yourself. When your puppy starts to chew on your 'new' chewing selection, praise him for his good behavior - the end result will be a dog that starts to select his own toys when the urge to chew happens.

Puppies seem to enjoy chewing on our fingers and this may even lead to biting our hands. When your puppy first begins this behavior, yelp in a quick squeak to simulate what other puppies and dogs would do. By following this with giving him an appropriate chew, he will soon learn that you are not to be chewed upon. Remember to praise him whenever he starts to chew on his toys.

You may need to repeat the chewing correction many times as puppies forget very fast and it will take him a while to get the right idea. Patience, as always, is an important factor when training a puppy.

A word of caution about tug-of-war games. Please avoid playing this type of game with your pup until 7-8 months of age. Although those teeth are new and shiny white, the roots are not fully developed. The teeth can be broken or pulled out of place easily at young ages. People should always win tug-of-war games.

\*\*KONG toys are great - they're shaped like a beehive with a hole in the center. When thrown they bounce in different directions, and the hole can be stuffed with a favorite treat or smeared with tasty things to occupy your pet when he is alone.

\*\*Also recommended for growing pups are the GUMMABONE form of NYLABONE toys. After 8 months, the teeth are fully developed and regular NYLABONES can be used.