



DOG TRAINING

Helping you and your dog become best friends for life.

CHEWING

OBJECTIVE: To learn how to manage your dogs chewing behavior.

While a puppy may chew more during the teething stage, chewing is a very normal behavior for dogs of all ages. They do it out of pleasure, they do it to pass the time, they do it to relieve stress and they do it to exercise their jaws and teeth. We need to allow our puppies and dogs to have an outlet for natural behaviors such as chewing. It is our responsibility to provide them with things that they can chew on and to help them learn that they are only to chew on their specified chew toys.



Dogs have no way knowing the difference between a chew toy and a slipper. While we can easily discriminate between chew toys and things not to be chewed, our dogs cannot. Dogs do not understand that a pair of shoes represents a \$100 chew toy; they just know the shoes are available and are a pretty good chew. Consider all the items in your home that your dog is NOT allowed to chew in contrast to the number of things he is allowed to chew. Is it any wonder our dogs guess wrong some of the time?

Given the way a puppy works, we need to start training him early on as to what items he can chew. We need to get him addicted to his chew toys! The first step is to restrict your puppy's access to anything but his chew toys, unless he is actively supervised. This keeps your belongings and your puppy safe. Sometimes dogs chew things that result in serious injury or illness. This means you need to keep your puppy in his crate or a puppy-proof room when he cannot be supervised. Adequate supervision means a responsible adult is devoting 100% of their attention to supervising the puppy.

The 3 key steps to chew training are:

1. Get your dog some suitable chew toys and get him to like them. There are three broad types of chew toys; natural chews like rawhide and bully sticks, man-made hard chews made to simulate a bone, and toys that dispense treats and in doing so provide your dog with some mental stimulation.

Natural Chews

Our favorite in this category is the **Bully Stick**. It is an all natural chewing alternative made from a tendon from a steer. Unlike rawhide, your dog is unlikely to swallow too large a piece of the Bully Stick, and with most dogs they last a substantial amount of time. We occasionally use rawhide but are always very particular about the rawhide we choose. Rawhide is not naturally white/beige. It is normally brown and only becomes lighter colored after a great deal of chemical processing. For this reason we prefer to only use rawhide that is manufactured in the USA. We always supervise the dogs when they are given bully sticks or rawhide to make sure that they do not try to swallow more than they should. These types of chews are edible, but intake should be limited.

Man-made hard chews

These are probably the most common chew toys for dogs and often the most durable. Our favorite in this category are the **Nylabone**[®] products. They come in various sizes, flavors and degrees of hardness for the puppy and adult dog that is a voracious chewer. Many Nylabone[®] products also help keep your dog's teeth and gums clean and healthy. If your dog lacks enthusiasm toward his Nylabone[®], try sanding the surface gently with some fine sandpaper. This will help release the flavor. Another alternative is to drill some holes in the bone that you fill with peanut butter.

Treat dispensing chew toys

The toys in this category not only give your dog something to chew, they can keep him very busy. The granddad in this category is **The Kong**[®]. Made of a hard, natural rubber and available in different sizes, their unique shape makes them bounce in an unpredictable manner, and their hollow center allows them to be stuffed with goodies. A Kong[®] stuffed with various size pieces of dog biscuit, kibble, or carrot can keep your dog busy and out of trouble. Other toys in this category include the **Premier twist 'n treat**[™] and **Busy Buddy**[®] and the **Planet Dog Orbee-Tuff**[®] line. The Planet Dog products are guaranteed for life.

A more sophisticated, and more challenging version of the Kong is the **Buster**[®] **Food Cube**. This sturdy, plastic cube is designed to hold dry kibble or small treats which it releases at random from a single hole as your dog plays with it. The dog will need to figure out that he needs to roll the Buster Cube with his nose and paws in order for it to release the kibble. The release valve is adjustable for increasing levels of difficulty. All you need to do is offer the cube to your dog and let him figure out the rest. Similar in concept, and also highly recommended are the **Premier Kibble Nibble**[™] **Activity Ball** and the **tug-a-jug**[™].

2. Prevent your dog from learning it is acceptable to chew things other than his toys
 - 🐾 Make sure your dog is confined in his crate or in a puppy-proof room unless you can keep him under 100% supervision.
 - 🐾 When he starts to chew something he is not supposed to, redirect him to one of his chew toys. Praise him when he chews his toy. Do not bring more attention to the dog by scolding him for chewing an inappropriate item.

- 🐾 If your puppy chews things such as cords, try spraying them with a product such as **Bitter® Apple** or **Bitter YUCK!™**. These products have a very bitter taste which 99% of dogs find objectionable. Once the dog chews on a treated item, it will stop chewing because it tastes so bad. We do sell two brands because some dogs amazingly like the taste of this stuff.
3. Once your dog is doing well, start to give him more access to your home while continuing to keep him under close supervision. If he starts chewing something he is not supposed to chew, trade him for a chew toy. Now that he has been trained to know what he can chew it will be easier to redirect his attention.