



### ***Play Biting***

Managing and controlling puppy biting problems can be a major challenge. Puppy biting or nipping starts out as a bit of fun, but needs to be controlled quickly to avoid ongoing problems. For most puppies, biting is a perfectly natural and essential phase to go through especially when they are teething. Puppies love to sink their sharp little teeth into just about anything during this teething stage, including the hands and feet of their owners.

The good news is that most puppies can be trained to regulate and minimize the biting pretty easily. The sooner you start to educate your puppy in bite inhibition the easier it will be – for all concerned.

There are lots of proven training methods to help correct your puppy's behavioral problems. Before getting into the specific techniques you can use to stop your puppy from biting, always keep these general dog behavior training rules in mind:

- Puppy socialization and bite inhibition training go hand in hand.
- Never slap or hit your puppy in the face. This does not work! Your puppy will just think you are playing or could become afraid of you. This may even lead to some much bigger problems than simple puppy nipping.
- The general rule to stop puppy biting problems is to always encourage acceptable behavior and always discourage unacceptable behavior.
- While you are trying to stop your puppies from biting, never play tug of war, wrestling, or chase type games with them. This only encourages the biting and nipping.
- Whichever method you choose to train your puppy, the golden rule is to be consistent. This means that you and anyone else who comes into contact with your puppy must enforce your chosen strategy every time your pup takes a nip.
- Another reason puppies can bite is if they are trying to assert their dominance over you. If this is the case for your puppy, it must be stopped immediately. When you have a dominant puppy, his biting will only be the beginning of many behavioral problems.

### ***Techniques to Stop Your Puppy from Biting***

The first step is to teach your puppy how to control the force of his/her biting. Your puppy's littermates will initiate this process and then it is up to you to continue on with it when your new puppy arrives home. This will ensure (not guarantee) that if your dog does bite someone in the future, the damage will be minimized.

When you have given your puppy sufficient feedback regarding the strength of his bite only then can you begin to reduce the prevalence of the biting behavior.

- I. If you catch the biting problem early on it may be easy to rectify. Just try to redirect the biting from your flesh to a toy or chew bone. For very young puppies this method is often all you'll need to do. As soon as your pup starts to bite your hands just let out a firm "No!" and replace your fingers with the chew toy.

2. This is probably the most popular method and our personal favorite. Make your puppy think he is hurting you each time he has a nip at you. This method replicates the way dogs sort out this biting amongst themselves. When puppies are biting and nipping each other it only stops when one puppy lets out a yelp. We can use this natural way dogs learn by letting out an “Ouch!” every time one of your puppies bite. The trick is to startle your dog with your voice, and then pull away and stop playing with your puppy for a while. Your pup will soon learn that when he starts to bite, his playmate (you) goes away.
3. Teach your puppy the obedience command “Leave it!” This method works great but is more suitable for older puppies.

If you're worried that you may have an overly aggressive puppy on your hands, please seek the advice of an experienced animal behaviorist or a dog trainer.