



Puppy Nipping

Mouthing and biting are natural puppy behaviors. Although puppy jaws lack strength and their bites rarely cause damage, the bites can be quite painful.



It is important for puppies to learn that biting people is wrong from an early age. Left unchecked, biting can become a major behavioral problem (and a safety concern) when that puppy becomes a full-grown dog.

Bite Inhibition

Since even the nicest and well-trained adult dog may, under certain circumstances, be provoked to bite, it is important to train puppies to *inhibit* their bite (not to bite hard). Puppies start to learn bite inhibition from their mother and littermates. So, to train your puppy, think as a fellow puppy would.



When the puppy bites hard, give a yelp "Ouch!" and take your hand away. If the puppy continues, yelp again and walk away. Ignore the puppy for a moment before calling the puppy over and giving attention. Praise the puppy as the bites soften.

Once he has learned to inhibit his bite, a reminder may need to be given in times of excitement. Give a warning like "Easy" or "Gentle". If this doesn't work, yelp and walk away. By the time your puppy is 4 months old, there should be no pressure to the bite.

Preventing Bites

Once the puppy learns to inhibit his bite, the next step is to teach the puppy that mouthing and biting are never allowed. If the puppy tries to mouth/bite your hand, give a command such as "off" or "no bite" with a soft but firm voice.

Remove your hand by placing it behind your back. By removing your hand, you are removing the "toy". Your puppy should quickly learn that biting results in playtime being over. Continue the training by giving the command before the puppy bites to avoid bites all together.

Keys to Success

You must be consistent. It is very important to have other family members and friends follow the same training as well. This will ensure that your puppy will learn quickly and not become confused.

It is also important to have plenty of toys available that they can chew on or bite. This will help keep the puppy from using you as a chew toy. Choose toys that your puppy will not confuse with non-chew toys later. If you let them chew on old shoes now, they will end up finding your expensive shoes later!



Caution: This program is for puppies only. Adult dogs that bite need a different approach. Look at our article on Dog Aggression.