



## Puppy Biting, Nipping, and General Unruliness

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Puppies are equipped with more than 25 razor sharp teeth that seem to be all over everything they encounter, including your skin. This is completely normal as puppies learn about the world around them. However, it is crucial that your puppy learn good bite inhibition at this young age. The following tips will help you navigate this stage of development.

### **Teach your puppy that biting means the fun ends.**

- If your puppy bites or nips you while playing, remove yourself from play for 30-60 seconds. This means all attention from you stops (no talking, touching, pushing, yelling, etc.). You go silent and remove your body from the situation keeping your hands and arms close to you. It is important to be consistent with this approach. For most puppies, attention is a great motivator, so use it to your advantage. Make sure to ignore the behaviors that you dislike and give attention to the desirable behaviors. You want to be sure to help your puppy learn the behaviors that you do wish to have them repeat so they always know what to do.
- It may be beneficial to keep a leash clipped to the dog's collar during this developmental stage so that you can easily move the dog away from the person they're mouthing on while keeping your arms and hands out of reach.

### **Encourage play that is non-contact such as fetch or tug.**

- It is easy for puppies to get over-excited when hands and arms are moving quickly around them! Encouraging play with a toy allows for a fun game without the temptation to view you as the toy!
  - Make sure to use your attention and play as ways to reinforce the behavior that you desire and to remove your attention and stop play if the puppy begins to nip, bite, etc.
- During play, you can also leave a short leash clipped to your puppy's collar to easily stop the play if they get too excited and start to bite, nip, etc.
- Using a toy that is longer can also help prevent your hands from accidentally getting in the way.
- It can also be very beneficial to incorporate short obedience training sessions between rounds of play to work on their impulse control!

## **Provide plenty of new and interesting toys and chew bones for your puppy to explore.**

- Chewing is a natural behavior for dogs! Be prepared with a variety of chews, bones, and toys to channel that natural chewing instinct.
- Rotating toys out, offering toys that dispense treats, and starting mentally enriching activities early will greatly help your puppy's nipping.
  - Need inspiration? Look for ideas by searching "canine enrichment" online!

## **Enroll in a puppy class!**

- Getting your puppy in a puppy class is one of the best ways to ensure proper socialization. They will be playing with other puppies, meeting strangers, and learning the foundations for basic obedience. Wayside Waifs offers an innovative puppy class called Puppy Preschool at a discounted rate for our adopters!

## **Stick to a schedule!**

- A consistent schedule of play time, quiet time, nap time, and potty breaks will help your puppy learn what to expect. As they get a little older, you will have already set them up to succeed with your family's schedule!

## **Time out!**

- If your puppy seems to be throwing a tantrum or is unable to calm down during interaction, it is acceptable to offer a time out. Calmly place your puppy in their crate and offer them something safe to chew. Allow them time to calm down, and let them try the situation again. It is important to remain calm and not use this as a form of punishment. It is simply offering them an alternative to their outburst.
  - Many times, younger puppies will fall asleep during time out, and they were likely just over-tired.

## **What to avoid:**

- Puppy biting can be a challenging behavior, but know that with a little hard work, it won't last forever. Physical punishment for nipping or biting can cause lasting repercussions and it is not recommended at any time. Physical punishment and the use of aversive training methods will often cause your puppy to become afraid of you, or worse, the behavior may escalate into aggression.

If, after trying these suggestions, you are still experiencing undesirable behaviors in your dog, SUBMIT QUESTIONS by clicking the link under Ask A Trainer on the Behavior and Training page of the Wayside Waifs website: <https://WaysideWaifs.org>

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