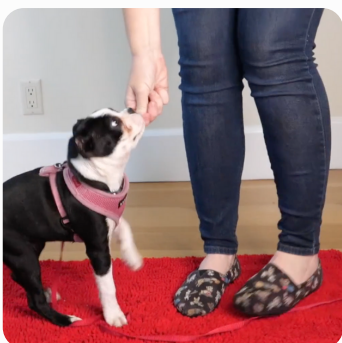
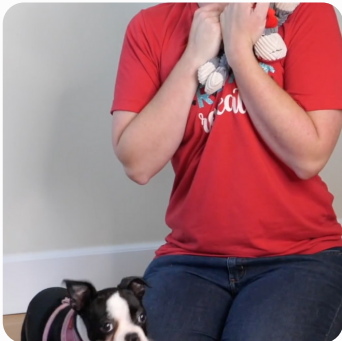


Problem Prevention: Mouthing

Puppies like to play, wrestle and nip with each other. When leaving their litter mates and going into a new home, they want to play the same way. But sometimes those nips can hurt! They don't understand our skin is more sensitive than their play mates with fur. Mother dogs and litter-mates teach a puppy when he's biting too hard. Mom will get up and walk away; litter mates yelp and stop playing. If a puppy has been taken away from their litter-mates too young, they may be particularly nippy because they haven't got a chance to learn "bit inhibition" the natural way. Bite inhibition is the amount of pressure a puppy learns to bite with. Puppies will also nip at others or other animals for attention. Dogs are very social, and this is their way of communicating. Teething is another reason for puppies to nip.



Puppies explore the world around them using their mouth. This can lead to your puppy mouthing or biting you. It's really important that your puppy learns to keep their teeth away from human skin.

To help your puppy to learn this you are going to start by initiating a toy play session with your puppy.

All the time that your puppy is making good choices - keeping their paws on the ground, and grabbing or pulling on the toy - you are going to praise them lots and continue playing. You can even reward your puppy with treats for playing nicely.

If at any point your puppy catches your hands or jumps up to pull at your clothes you're going to disengage from your puppy a little. Start by sitting back a bit and folding your arms. If your puppy persists, stand up and turn away from your puppy. You can walk further away or go beyond a baby gate to prevent your puppy from continuing to practice unwanted behaviour.

Try to avoid yelping or making a sudden sound, as this often backfires when your puppy thinks you have become a human squeaky toy, and gets very excited!!

Simply ignore your puppy, stop the fun then leave. Be boring! Do not speak, look or touch your dog. Simply get up and walk away. Movement will encourage your puppy to play. If biting always stops the fun, biting at hands and clothes will occur less often.

As soon as your puppy makes an alternative choice - for example putting their paws on the ground, or letting go of your clothes, you are going to praise and reward them generously.

Avoid placing your hands or any body parts in your puppy's mouth. This will teach your puppy that it's okay to have humans hands in their mouth.

If you find that your puppy is getting a bit stuck and continues to bite, jump and grab your clothes, it's likely that your puppy needs to get some more sleep and have a nap. Settle them down with a calm enrichment activity to help them relax before they fall asleep.

Always remember to reward everything good your puppy does as this will help your puppy to make better choices in the future too.