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How We Train Our Puppies to Not Bite Us

We often hear that people find that their pug puppy uses their hands and feet as chew toys. Puppies have little, but extremely sharp teeth. This painful behavior can make holding or playing with the puppy an unpleasant task. Here are our tips on how we train our pug puppies from becoming pug-piranhas.

Biting and chewing is part of a dog's normal development

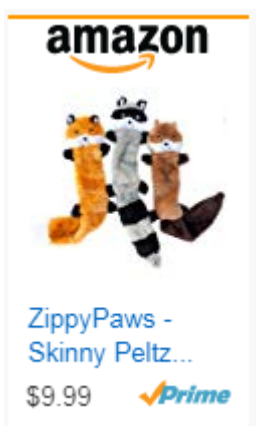
Biting and chewing is a normal developmental process for puppies. They need to chew and bite as their new teeth come in. Without acceptable solutions, they will use whatever object is closest to their mouth. The puppy needs our help to learn to what is considered safe and appropriate chewing. They can even develop bad habits for chewing without guidance from humans on what is okay to chew on and what is off limits.

Providing numerous safe chewing opportunities and tools

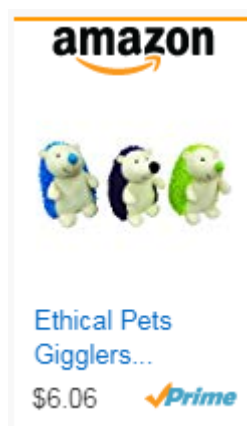
Every puppy needs safe items to chew. Whenever we hold one, we make sure we have something for them to bite and chew. We prefer soft toys and rope toys. We have these scattered throughout our home so that we can easily grab one for the puppy when we need to redirect them off of an inappropriate item (i.e., our fingers, toes, or the furniture). Providing this safe alternative helps the puppy understand that certain items belong to humans, and are off limits, and other items are okay for him to chew on, like his toys.

We recommend having several toys available. We wash the dirty soft toys in the washing machine, and use the dishwasher for hard surface toys. We throw away ratty or broken toys.

We almost always get our toys on Amazon for economy and convenience. Here are the toys we have in our home:



<https://amzn.to/2lrG4ow>



<https://amzn.to/2lqBxTI>



<https://amzn.to/2PgaOca>

Using clear signals to communicate unacceptable behavior

We say the word “Nah” in a way that makes it sound like a buzzer from a game show. This helps to signal clearly to our pugs when a behavior is unacceptable. We have a 3-step process for correcting biting:

- 1) Say “Nah!” as soon as the pug puts its mouth on us.
- 2) Say “No bite!” immediately following the “Nah!” signal.
- 3) Give the pug a toy, and praise him when he takes the toy.

Sometimes the pug does not realize that biting hurts us. They are used to biting their siblings and being bit by them when they play. The puppy may think that biting is fun play for humans, too. We use the language that their siblings do when the biting hurts. We make the sound of a puppy squealing. When done properly, this usually stops a puppy from biting quickly, and he or she may even express concern that he or she caused pain. We use the same 3-step process as above:

- 1) Squeal loudly as soon as the pug puts its mouth on us.
- 2) Say “No bite!” immediately following the squeal.
- 3) Give the pug a toy, and praise him when he takes the toy.

Using clicker training to keep puppies too busy to bite

We train our pugs with positive reinforcement using clickers. Clickers are generally small plastic noise makers that emit a clicking sound that helps dogs relate the sound to a positive reward. This operant conditioning breaks through the language barrier in order to communicate what action/behavior will get the dog the reward.

An excellent clicker training introduction video on YouTube is from Victoria Stilwell:

<https://youtu.be/7TxvHDVX2rQ>

We prefer the clickers with the attached wrist strap. This helps free our hands when necessary, but also keeps the clicker close when needed.

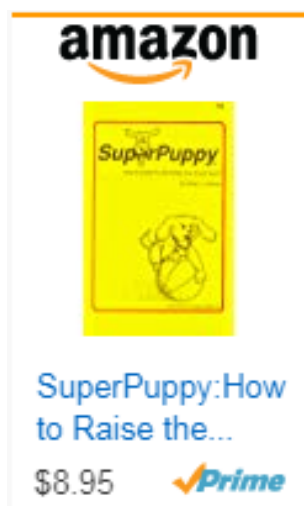
We purchase our clickers on Amazon:



Package of clickers: <https://amzn.to/2DjUxPb>

SuperPuppy helps make super dogs

SuperPuppy is a great training booklet that was written by Peter J. Vollmer. We have used these techniques and recommended this booklet for nearly 30 years. The book is easy to read and full of useful training tips. It can be purchased on Amazon at:



<https://amzn.to/2lt2xBo>

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions about our process.

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