

Chewing in Dogs

By Sherry Woodard

Why does my dog chew on things?

Chewing is a normal canine behavior. So, instead of punishing your dog for chewing, try to redirect his attention to more appropriate objects. If your dog starts chewing on an inappropriate item, simply offer him an appropriate one. When he begins to chew on it, give him lavish praise. You shouldn't allow your dog to chew on *any* of your possessions (even the ones that you don't mind him chewing up), since he can't distinguish between an old worn-out shoe and a brand-new one.



What sort of things should my dog chew on?

Pet supply stores have a wide variety of durable rubber or nylon toys that satisfy a dog's urge to chew. Dog "puzzles" that you can stuff treats into (like Kongs and Buster Cubes) can keep her occupied for a good long while. You can also buy sterilized, hollow bones that you can fill with peanut butter, wet dog food mixed with dry, or a piece of cheese. If your dog empties the bone or toy too quickly, experiment with different fillers. You can try freezing wet dog food or wedging a piece of hard cheese tightly inside the toy or bone.

To prevent your dog from becoming bored, give her a variety of items to chew that offer different tastes, odors, textures and challenges. Occasionally add new items to your dog's choices. Besides the above suggestions, many dogs love frozen carrots, cow hooves and Nylabones.

If your dog is very enthusiastic about chewing, make sure chew toys are available to him all the time. For example, put chew toys outside if you leave your dog in the yard for more than a few minutes. Remember, too, that dogs will chew out of boredom, so make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise and interaction with you on a daily basis.

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