

Puppy Biting/Nipping

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It is never a good idea to let Puppy play with your hands or feet – no matter how cute it seems. This teaches Puppy it is OK to bite skin. Even though tiny puppies playing tug-of-war with your big finger is cute, it is teaching a very bad habit! Never let a puppy do something once that you do not want him to repeat. It is far easier to prevent bad habits from developing that it is to retrain an older puppy or adult dog.

First, teach pup that its mouth has strength and he can control it. Let puppy at first apply a bit of pressure when he puts his mouth on you. He needs to learn he has jaw control and how hard is too hard. This is in case puppy forgets manners and accidentally gets his mouth on you he will have learned that humans need gentle. Then he needs to learn that if his mouth gets on you, all play stops and he gets nothing. Puppies are very social creatures and refusing to engage in play can be an effective training technique. As soon as puppy starts to bite or nip, give a loud, yelping “OUCH!!!” Glare at the pup, get up and move away. After a few seconds or so, get a toy and return to puppy. Encourage the puppy to play with the toy. If he goes for you with a nip, repeat yelping and walking away. If the pup persists in this behavior (nipping), he may need you to go! Just get up and walk away. If you have yelped and walked away a couple times and pup keeps coming back for more, step out of the room, close a door and count to ten. Go back to the puppy and try again. Each leaving of the pup should be no more than a few seconds – after that pup has moved onto something else in his mind.

Puppies and dogs will learn to bite as a means of garnering attention. When you refuse to give attention for biting and you LEAVE when this happens, pup learns that biting gets nothing. Then you replace the undesired behavior with a desired.

If the biting seems more than just play or attention getting, you need immediate intervention from a good trainer or behavioral consultant. Even excessive play biting needs professional help and fast!

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