

# Chewing



## TIPS

### Why dogs chew

Chewing is all about toning jaw muscles, dogs may no longer need to split bones and grind down marrow to survive, but the urge is hardwired into them. Some dogs live to chew; others can take it or leave it. How often dogs chew and what they chew is down to individual taste.

What is certain is that chewing is normal and healthy, but it can become a problem if your dog is targeting the wrong things to chew.

### It's not a phase

Puppies do chew more, yes. But chewing isn't like teething in babies; it won't peter out and eventually stop. All dogs chew a bit and some dogs chew *a lot*. Whether you have a puppy or an adult dog, give him plenty of allowed things to chew right away to get him hooked on those instead of your shoes.

### The things dogs chew

Edible things like pigs ears or bully sticks; Non-edibles like rubber toys, nylabones or Kongs; Things to dissect like soft/plush toys or rope toys; Puzzle toys like stuffed Kongs, treat balls or stuffed bones.

Experiment to find out what your dog prefers. Always have a mixed selection at hand and rotate different types of chew items to keep your dog interested.



### The training part

**Step 1. Prevent mistakes.** When you can't supervise, put your puppy or dog in an enclosed, dog-proofed area with allowed chew items.

**Step 2. Teach good chewing choices.** Audition a range of chew items until you find the ones that most appeal to your dog. Dogs have texture preferences, so try to match what yours like. If he is attacking the sofa pillows, try giving him plush/soft toys. If he is eyeing the table leg, try something harder like a root chew. Praise liberally when your dog chews something allowed and give him a treat every now and then for chewing on allowed items.

**Step 3. Interrupt mistakes.** If your dog chews the wrong thing, interrupt and trade him for something he can chew on. Praise liberally when he does.

**Step 4. Repeat if needed.** If mistakes happen a lot, revisit step 1. Go back to using an enclosed, dog-proofed area until your dog is consistently making better chewing choices.

### Training Tip:

Rotate different types of chew items to keep your dog interested.

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