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**Why Your Puppy Nips – And 5 Ways To Get Him To Stop**

**By Adam G. Katz**

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Here's a news flash - puppies nip!

Okay, I guess you already knew that. But here's the surprise - you may actually be encouraging your puppy to nip. Let's talk about how to stop this behaviour before it grows up to be an adult-sized dog problem.

Puppies are a lot like babies - they use their mouths in part to explore their world. Little kids are forever sticking things in their mouth - from your favourite house plant to the bar of soap in the tub. That's one of the ways they experience taste and texture, and figure out what's good and what's not. It's all about experimentation.

Puppies are the same. They want to see just how soft your finger is, or what that leash tastes like. In addition, biting or nipping is an important part of learning social skills in their "wolf" pack - the social structure that makes up your dog's life.

And with some breeds, such as Border Collies, biting or nipping is even more instinctive because of the nature of the breed - they're born and bred to herd livestock, and that's how a 50 or 60 pound dog will control a 1,000 pound cow - by biting at the heels or nose.

If your dog was allowed to remain with mom and his littermates for an appropriate amount of time (until at least 8 weeks of age), then mom should have taught him the beginnings of bite inhibition. As the pups began to grow and develop those needle-sharp little puppy teeth, mom would have disciplined him for being too rough, either with her or his littermates. Junior soon learns that all play will stop and he'll get smacked down by mom if he gets carried away.

But when you get that puppy home, and he becomes part of the family, you may be encouraging him to nip by letting the kids run away from him, squealing and giggling in an effort to play "chase" games. While this is cute at the beginning, it can soon turn into a full-fledged problem when he's no longer such a small, cute puppy, and views any child running away as fair game.

You can also encourage this kind of bad behaviour by teasing him with toys - holding them just above his head and yanking them out of range when he jumps for the toy or nips at it. (This also encourages another bad habit: jumping.)

Here's 5 things you can do to stop your puppy from nipping.

## Why Your Puppy Nips – And 5 Ways To Get Him To Stop

### 1. When your puppy does nip - stop all play

If your puppy nips too hard, say "Ouch!" in a loud-enough voice to surprise him (don't start off by screaming!) and stop all play. Turn your back on him, and refuse to continue the game. He should come around to face you and find out what's wrong - tell him "bad dog - no bite" in a firm tone of voice. Do this every time he nips until he gets the idea that nipping means no more fun.

### 2. Replace your flesh with a toy

When you've resumed play, and if your puppy tries to nip again, try replacing your hand or arm (or whatever's being nipped) with a toy. Teach your puppy that you're not the toy. Put a toy in between you and those needle-sharp teeth!

### 3. The Nose Tap

If your puppy nips turn to him immediately and give him the "sit" command. Take your forefinger and hold it up in front of his nose, then tap him on the nose and say "no bite" in a stern tone of voice. It's important to note two things here: 1) the nose tap isn't designed as a dire punishment - you're not trying to hurt him, but rather startle him into stopping the behaviour; and 2) your tone of voice is just as important as the nose tap. Don't scream at him - your voice should be stern and give a clear warning - think of it as a verbal growl - something that he can understand as a dog.

An interesting result of this manner of breaking this habit is that down the road, when your puppy has learned to recognize the raised finger - he'll usually stop whatever behaviour he's engaging in just because he knows what's coming. You won't even have to raise your voice - just lift that finger.

### 4. Don't encourage biting or nipping in the first place

Don't let the kids start "chase" games - that encourages dogs to think that the kids are prey. Don't play games that involve waving your hands in front of your dog and encouraging him to jump or nip.

Don't play tug-of-war with your dog - it will not only encourage him to think he's your equal, it can promote nipping if you use a rope toy, for example, because he'll try to bite at your hands to make you lose your grip on the toy.

Play games of fetch and retrieval, but be sure that your dog knows the "drop" or "release" command so you're not fighting over the toy.

### 5. Be consistent

Stop the nipping behaviour as soon as it starts, and be consistent about disciplining your puppy for it.

Don't let him get away with nipping on one day, and then discipline for the same behaviour the next.

Dogs don't understand "sometimes it's ok," or "maybe it's ok if you don't nip too hard and I'm in a good mood." They understand "Don't ever do that," and "No more treats if you do that."

For more: <http://tinyurl.com/4efaq>

Author, "Secrets of a Professional Dog Trainer!" which you can read more about at:<http://tinyurl.com/4efaq>

## **Puppy Development**

**By Mike Yeager**

Puppy development and growth is very exciting. After a puppy gets over its fear of its new surroundings, it will become very curious. People sometimes leave their puppy for a few minutes, come back and can't find it anywhere. If you can't find your puppy, remember to look under the furniture and in small corners. Also, don't leave small items that your puppy might choke on lying around. Puppy development does not need to be a mystery. It might take a little while to housetrain your puppy, and you may also have some furniture that is slightly chewed. Remember that your puppy is still learning and be patient with it. No matter what breed your puppy is, it is sure to be a source of fun and enjoyment to the whole family.

Tips on understanding Puppy Development.

It is important to do all you can to increase your puppies development. Regardless of what breed of puppy you have, be sure to play with it and encourage it. A puppy that is lazy and is never played with will grow into a spoiled, lazy, and unpleasant dog. Having another puppy to play with might also increase puppy development. Be sure to reward your puppy with dog treats and dog toys when it is being good. With the right puppy development, your puppy will grow into a fine, healthy, and energetic dog that you will enjoy for years.

Mike Yeager  
Publisher

Puppy Development

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Even Lassie Had Her Moments

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