

Teaching Puppies What NOT To Chew On

If you'd like to learn the specific training routines ALL puppies should go through to learn how to NOT chew on things he shouldn't, you can find those lessons in this training program: [Hands Off Dog Training Formula](#)

Today I'd like to introduce you to a concept that I don't hear anyone else talking about for how to get your dog to stop his destructive chewing.

I call this concept: "Cataloging Chewables"

What lots of dog owners don't realize is that over a 90 day time span you can help your dog build a mental catalog of all the items in your house that he is ALLOWED to chew on...

... plus a list of all the items he's NOT allowed to chew on.

You have to realize that to your dog... a creature whose natural instinct is to chew on things... that it would be VERY hard to be able to tell the difference between chewing on something you allow him to chew on like a rawhide bone; and something you don't want him chewing on like your expensive leather shoes.

Or what about the difference between a 'Stuffing Filled' plush toy, or down pillow?

Or a rubber Kong toy, and the rubber on the bottom of your tennis shoes.

You can see how this can be hard for a dog to figure out.

And the technique that most people try to use to fix this behavior is simply a 'reactive' behavior. If they see the dog chewing on a shoe they yell at the dog or swat the dog.

So picture what that must be like for the dog who doesn't really understand the difference between leather shoes and rawhide bones. Or the difference between down pillows and stuffed plush dog toys.

The dog thinks both objects are basically the same... and can't tell the difference in the beginning between two similar objects... so he often times just doesn't understand why he gets swated or yelled at for chewing on something sometimes, and NOT in trouble other times.

All your dog thinks is that you are VERY inconsistent... and he wishes you wouldn't yell at him randomly like you do for no reason at all ;-)

If you doubt what I'm telling you here, and you think your dog really can tell the difference between similar good and bad chew toys, let me tell you a story that helped me realize how hard it is to teach dogs the differences between objects.

I had just ordered a new Advanced dog training DVD and it was talking about how to teach your dog what is called 'Object Discrimination'... or how to train a dog to bring back an object to you that you call by name.

In this drill the end goal was to be able to place three very different objects out on the floor each a few feet away from each other; call the object by name and have the dog bring that object back to you.

First the DVD talked about how to train an animal to bring one object back when it was sitting by itself... which was fairly easy for my dog Bauer to learn how to do.

But then they had me put 2 different objects out on the floor and it was MUCH more difficult for Bauer to figure out which object to bring back.

I had to call an object multiple times until he brought the right one back, and then give him a treat for doing so. Then I'd call the other object and only reward him when he brought that one back. And the most amazing part was watching the dog try to figure out how to do the task right.

You could literally see the wheels turning in his little brain.

He was constantly experimenting with different possible solutions for getting a treat. First he tried bringing back the toy he last brought me, then he tried alternating between which toy he brought me.

He'd try only bringing back toys on the right, and then only toys on the left.

And it took several days for him to figure out the names of the toys and what I was trying to get him to do.

And I share this story with you to help you realize how much harder it is than YOU realize for a dog to tell the difference between different objects. And how unrealistic it can be to just expect your dog to know the difference without some conscious training effort.

So what you need to start doing is take the next 90 days and start teaching your dog and help build up a mental Catalog in his mind of all the objects it's OK to chew on and all the ones it's not OK to chew on.

How do you do this?

Step 1) First teach your dog the "Leave it" command like I show you how to teach in my Hands Off Dog Training program with my then little Golden Retriever puppy. As well as the Drop It command.

Teaching your dog to "Leave it" is NOW going to be your way to tell your dog to NOT touch something. And the training process of teaching him to Drop It automatically instills in your dog a realization that when he obeys your command he gets rewarded.

Step 2) Once your dog will willingly leave an object he was chewing on alone or drop it from his mouth, you now need to give him a reward.

And the best type of reward in this situation is a reward that satisfies his chewing urges... and more specifically you want to give him a toy with his preferred texture of chewiness at that time.

So how I taught my dog to stop chewing on rubber shoes, was first tell him to "Drop it" or "Leave it" when I saw him chewing on a shoe... which he would eagerly do, because he knows he gets rewarded for that.

Then I would grab an appropriate rubber dog toy that I thought might be similar in texture, walk it over to him, remove the rubber soled shoe from his environment and place the rubber toy in his mouth, and tell him he was a good dog for chewing on the 'Appropriate' chew toy.

If you'll do this consistently, and always tell your dog to leave certain objects alone, and always replace them with an appropriate 'Chewable' object, your dog will start to develop a mental catalog of all the items it's OK to chew on in your house, and leave the NON 'Chewable' objects completely alone.

And if you're interested in learning about all the ways to put this principle of Cataloging Chewables into action, like how to do it when you aren't home, and how to do it when you can't see your dog, then I highly recommend picking up a copy of my [Hands Off Dog Training Formula program](#).

Hope that helps, and please send me any questions or feedback you have so I can answer your questions or share your success story with other subscribers to this newsletter!

To A More Obedient Dog!

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