

# CHEWING GOT YOU DOWN?



## WHAT'S UP WITH THE CHEWING?

Chewing is a natural behavior for dogs. They use their mouths to explore the environment in the same way humans use their hands as investigative tools. Dogs need to chew to relieve stress and excess energy. In fact, puppy teething is a natural part of development.

## PROVIDE CHEW TOYS

Make sure your dog has plenty of chew toys. Don't give them any household items, such as old shoes, since it may encourage them to also chew on new ones! Lonely dogs that are left alone for long periods of time in a non-stimulating environment chew out of boredom.

## CRATE TRAIN THEM

When you must leave your dog alone, confine him to a crate or wire kennel while you are away. (Obviously, the dog should not remain in the crate for hours on end!) The crate is a training tool.

## HOW TO CRATE TRAIN

For the first two weeks of training, do not allow your dog any unsupervised time by himself. Put him in his crate each and every time that he is left alone. Do not give him the opportunity to chew a forbidden object, dig, or become destructive without receiving correction.

Starting with the third week, put the dog in his crate with the door open and leave for about twenty minutes. If you return home to any signs of destruction, shorten the length of time that you are gone until you arrive at a time span that is successful.

From that point on, SLOWLY increase the length of time you are gone until you have reached your goal. If at any time you come home to destruction, go backward in time at least two steps and maintain that time frame for at least a week; then continue training.

## REPLACE TOYS

Replace toys with a meat-scented nylon bone. Make this bone the focus of play session at least twice a day. The combination of the owner's scent with the meat scent makes it an appealing object. Since the toy bone has now become the focus of intense interaction between the dog and owner, the vast majority of dogs will aim their chewing at it.

## PUPPIES & LAST TIPS

Puppies go through a teething period at about three months of age, when the sharp little milk teeth begin to loosen and fall out. New, larger adult teeth cut through the gums and replace the baby teeth. At 6-7 months of age the transition is complete and a set of new teeth are ready for action. Teething is painful and the pup wants to chew and gnaw to relieve his discomfort. Give the pup two or three toys to chew.

Also, make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise. Under-exercised dogs will be more likely to chew and otherwise engage in destructive behavior when you are gone for extended periods.