

# Teaching Your Dog NO BITE

**Puppies play with other puppies by biting each other!** It is a very natural thing to do. It can be very confusing to a pup if you scold him for playing the only way he knows how, and then encourage him to play again.

**I have taught puppies and stray dogs to stop nipping and biting** "people" by doing what "mom dog" and "littermates" do. Next time he bites or nips you "yelp" in a noticeably loud and high-pitched voice. Usually, the pup will look at you kind of funny, like he doesn't understand, and then proceed to bite you again. This time you "yelp" louder and in a *very* high pitch, maybe jumping back at the same time as if you're really hurt. Whenever you do this technique, you must always *immediately* furnish an appropriate chew toy for him to bite and play with. After a half dozen times of this, the pup usually gets the message. But, he is still a puppy, and he will "forget" next time he wants to play and bite again (after all, that's the only way he's played for his whole life!) It will take a week or two until this pup finally "gets it." Some learn much faster, and others more slowly, but this technique has never failed me as long as every person is *consistent*. That means every time the pup bites, "yelp!" Tell children and visitors to do the same. (Yes, really tell them to do the same, and make sure they do it; maybe they'll learn something in the process). If your puppy or dog reacts in a frightened manner of your yelping, then try it again in a softer, less frightening manner. You do not want to frighten the dog, only let it know that biting too hard hurts.

**As the pup gets older**, if he is not 99% reliable not to bite, after you "yelp," put your hand over his muzzle gently but firmly (sometimes referred to as a nose-hug) immediately after you yelp and when you say "No Bite!" Then immediately give him a chew toy and say "Good Bite!" You always want to end a lesson being taught with praise, that way, your dog will be more willing to learn. This will also teach your dog to go get a chew toy when he gets so excited that he just must bite something.

**If these methods fail to work** another option you have is to get up, turn your back to your dog and walk away whenever he bites or nips you. No reprimand, no emotion, simply turn your back to your dog immediately after he bites you (the *\*first\** time) and walk away. After about 10 minutes, approach him again. Be sure that you are praising him when he is biting appropriate things and not you. This will teach your dog that he will not receive the attention he desires unless he behaves appropriately.

**But if none of these things work?** The problem you are experiencing is one of the hardest solutions to describe via the Internet that I have come across. That is because, if the old standby's (yelping and no bite, and walking away) don't work, then the problem is usually based on a lack of communication in general: Meaning, the dog does not understand what you are trying to communicate, so it becomes frustrated at your attempts at getting it to stop biting and in its frustration, bites more. This can actually make the problem worse.

**The first thing** to look at is if your dog is getting enough physical and mental stimulation on a daily basis. Your puppy or dog should be able to be off-lead (off-leash), running around quite a bit to expend some of energy. Depending on the age, size and breed of your dog, she may require up to 2 hours per day of vigorous activity. Playing fetch and going for walks does not suffice for all dogs. Both of these activities are quite mindless and can be done for very long periods of time without much mental concentration.

**Next, teach your dog the [Settle](#) command.** Begin teaching your dog at times when she is already resting so it is easy for her to succeed. You can also teach her an "easy" command by holding a treat within your fist and allowing her to gently take the treat. When she is forceful, she does not get the treat, as she becomes gentler and more "easy" she gets the treat. You will be rewarding her for inhibiting her bite and her aggressiveness.

**This takes many, many repetitions.** If your dog is biting and nipping continually and getting consistent

attention for it (negative or positive) she may have already learned that she can get what she wants by using force. You need to change this so that she receives more and better rewards for being "easy," for "[settling](#)" for "[leaving it](#)" etc.

**When you reward, be use a two and three-step approach.** At the instant the good behavior is initiated (she lightens up just a little) give her the verbal reward "Good Girl!" This is her cue, so that she learns exactly what behavior pleases you. After the verbal reward, give her a food treat. (step 2). And while she is eating the food treat (or after she inhales it) pat her on the sides for the physical-touch (step 3) reward. The food treat (step 2) can and should be omitted periodically.

**You need to convince her that it is beneficial and in her best interest to behave the way you want her to.** Setting her up to succeed so that she can be praised is the best method to do this. Using times when she is more relaxed in the first place... and then giving her a chew toy to chew on and praising her for a good "easy" as she leisurely chews on the chew toy may also help.

Right now, your focus may be on all her biting and rough-play antics. You may be giving her the most attention during these times. Turn this around, so that you are giving her more (and better) attention when she is behaving appropriately. This can be quite difficult with puppies and young dogs, and her appropriate behavior may disappear quickly - but it is important that you recognize it and praise it in the instant that it is there.

**For example,** I have had stray puppies come into the house that have never been in a house before... they run around all the furniture and bounce off the walls, and run into me biting and snapping out of pure joy and excitement. If they refuse the chew toy (a soft stuffed animal) I give to them and persist on biting *me* instead, I give them my calm, but firm "uh-uh" (meaning: I am not happy with what you are doing). The instant they (or I) put the chew toy in their mouth, I praise "Good Girl" and as I try to pet them, they usually try to bite my hand out of their excitement. So, I say, "Uh-uh" again. If they persist, I turn my back to them. If they climb up on my back, I get up and walk away. When they follow me biting at my heels... I throw a toy for them in front of me (they usually don't even know where it came from) and this, or something similar, usually takes their attention off me and they chase the toy. Sometimes I dangle a toy above their heads to entice them to bite the toy. When the toy is in their mouth: "Good Girl!" and I try to play with them using the toy again.

This type of scenario is repeated many, many times. Consistent positive reinforcement for biting appropriate items, and no reinforcement of behaving inappropriately. After an afternoon some pups settle down, others take a few days, and some take a week or more. They will periodically "forget" the rules (very often at first), but will begin to understand the communication at hand, and comply after repeated and consistent "lessons."

Think about "What am I communicating to my dog?" And "What is it like to be trained by me?" Puppies and dogs that continue to nip and bite relentlessly, usually do not understand you. For another helpful article, point your browser to: [http://www.stbernardrescue.org/behavior/bite\\_inhibition.html](http://www.stbernardrescue.org/behavior/bite_inhibition.html) and learn how to teach your dog bite inhibition.

*Source: [www.doggiedoor.com](http://www.doggiedoor.com)*