

Puppy Play - Biting

“My young puppy keeps biting our hands – HELP”

Puppies are notorious at biting your hands – and those sharp puppy teeth can be very painful. But rest assured that this is a very normal thing – it doesn't mean that your pup is aggressive. If you watch a litter of puppies interacting with each other, you'll see them biting each other all the time. The problem is that they often mistake our hands and clothes and ankles as being just like their littermates.

How do we teach the pup not to do this to us? First, we'll start with some basic rules of how to interact with a young puppy.

- Puppies might see your hands the way they'd see each others' jaws. Don't wave your hands around the pup's face or grab at the pup. Use your hands to pick up toys (just as you'd like the pup to do) or for soft, gentle petting.
- Don't play “chase-me” games where you and the puppy chase you grab at each other.
- Make sure the puppy is getting enough exercise. How much is “enough”? Probably more than you think – at least 40 minutes to an hour of running and playing a day.

Puppies LOVE to play – that's what they live for. What's the worst thing that could happen to them? Play ending. So that's how we will “punish” them for being too rough – by suddenly making play stop when they bite. The rule is “All fun and games end when puppy teeth touch human skirt”

Pups bite because it is fun, it's their way of playing, and it gains them attention. So, to punish the puppy, all we have to do is make the fun end. If you're playing with your pup and his teeth touch you, yelp loudly and shrilly like a hurt puppy. (If this makes him more excited, or if you're a guy who can't really do this, bellow like he's really hurt you).

If you still are having problems with you pup biting while playing talk to your vet or seek professional help.

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