



After a few moments pat the puppy. Most puppies will then lick your hands – if this happens, give lots of praise and continue to pat. If the puppy goes to mouth again, give your “yelp” (just like another puppy would do if the puppy it was playing with got too rough) and remove your hands again. For the really persistent ones, you may have to move away from the puppy. Be really consistent. Let the puppy know that it is not acceptable to bite human flesh and that it hurts (even if it doesn’t).

Never play games that involve using your hands as playthings, so no roughing up the puppy around the head which will encourage mouthiness.

Some puppies (particularly those with working breed in them) will bite your feet and ankles while you walk. When this happens you need to *stop walking* and distract the dog - just a quick “hey” or “ah-ah” is enough for most puppies. As soon as the dog stops, praise profusely (give a treat if you have one in your pocket). Try walking again (just one step). If the dog doesn’t bite your feet again praise and give a treat again. This way you are letting the puppy know what is acceptable behaviour. It is unfair to reprimand the puppy for unwanted behaviour without ensuring they understand what is required. Ensure you *never* continue walking while the puppy is biting your feet or ankles. The distraction will probably not work unless you have stopped.

## DOG TRAINING

The Animal Welfare League holds regular classes for adult dogs and puppies. In addition, the dog behavioural trainers on staff are available to give you advice over the telephone or provide individual training sessions when required.



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# PUPPIES

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*It is normal for puppies to chew, dig and bite hands. A puppy that didn't do these things would be very unusual.*

## CHEWING

Puppies like to pick things up with their mouth and their little puppy teeth are very sharp and can easily cause damage to objects. In addition, while puppies are teething it is very necessary for them to chew to help relieve the discomfort.

You will need to puppy proof the house and garden – this will involve putting any items the puppy may chew out of reach.

While the puppy is inside ensure you are always supervising (you will need to do this during the housetraining period anyway) and should the puppy start chewing an item that is unsuitable give a quick “ah-ah” or “hey” and redirect on to another object that the puppy is allowed to chew. Praise the puppy when he/she starts to chew the appropriate item. There is no need for physical punishment or to verbally reprimand the puppy. The word you use should just be enough to startle the dog and interrupt the behaviour, not to make him/her afraid. If you punish the dog he/she will just learn not to chew in front of you, not what they should and shouldn't chew. You will then find the destructiveness happens when you are not present.

Ensure the puppy has plenty of his/her own toys and items to chew and rotate these regularly to keep the dog interested. Spend plenty of time with your puppy and ensure he/she is getting enough physical and mental stimulation.



Should you find items chewed on return after you have been absent do not reprimand. Your puppy will not understand why you are angry. In addition, your puppy will become nervous about your impending return in future and a stressed puppy is much more likely to chew (it's a great stress reliever!). The “guilty” look your dog is giving you is not an admission of guilt, it is an appeasement gesture designed to calm you down.

## DIGGING

Some puppies love to dig and this can sometimes continue well into old age! For dogs that need to dig provide them with a digging pit. This will mean sacrificing a part of the garden you are happy for the dog to dig in (it is preferable that this is an area the dog has already shown a liking to). You can encourage the dog to dig there by placing items just under the soil, eg bones, bits of dry dog food, etc. and take the dog there and show him/her that it is okay to dig. Any time you see the dog digging in the pit praise profusely.



Should you catch the dog digging in an inappropriate area, distract the dog with a quick “hey” or “ah-ah” and take the dog to the digging pit. Praise if the dog chooses to dig there. If you find holes that have been dug in your absence do not reprimand when you get home. The dog will not associate your punishment with the act of digging the holes. He/she will just become fearful of your return next time and stressed dogs are more likely to dig, chew and partake in other destructive behaviours. The “guilty” look your dog is showing is not an admission of guilt, it is an appeasement gesture to get you to calm down.

If you find your dog digging excessively ensure you are providing enough physical and mental stimulation. This will involve *regular* walking (at least daily) as well as plenty of interaction with family members. Ensure the puppy has plenty of things to keep him/her occupied when you are absent or not directly supervising the puppy, eg raw bones, toys, food releasing toys, etc. It is strongly recommended to take your puppy to a positive reinforcement based puppy class to keep him/her mentally stimulated and have regular short training sessions at home.

## MOUthing

(biting hands and other parts of your body)

It is necessary for puppies to mouth. They are learning the strength of their jaws and how to inhibit their bite. It is more of a worry if your puppy never bites your hands. You can teach your puppy that this biting is not acceptable by giving a high pitched “yelp” each time teeth touch your flesh. Remove your hands from reach and do not give the puppy any other attention.