

keeps the pup interested in the chew treats and he is more willing to spend time occupying himself with them.

The second thing that most articles don't address and that I have found to be a pattern in my pups is that as the pup tires or becomes over-stimulated, the nipping behaviors increase. I think it important to recognize those times that the nipping escalates. In my mind, the pup is attempting to tell you that he is tired and needs a quiet time to rest. These are the times that I will put my pup into his crate or other confined area for a nap. Sometimes the pup may only sleep for 20 minutes, but after some rest, I think you will find that the nipping is once again much less frequent.

This young age is also when I start teaching my pup to be gentle in taking a treat from my hand, and to allow me to remove things from his mouth. Teaching the pup to accept you examining his teeth and/or removing objects from his mouth is important. Looking closely at the mouth is helpful to determine the progress of teething, the health of the teeth and gums in an older dog, etc. Also, there may be a time when safety becomes a factor. A friend of mine discovered one day that her pup had removed a sharp-edged metal can top from the garbage and had it buried in his mouth. Had this pup resisted removal, injury could have resulted. Since the pup accepted his owner's fingers in his mouth and understood the concept of her removing things from his mouth, the offending object was removed without incident.

For lack of a better title, we call this "Giving and Taking Away of Treats" at the kennel club where I teach obedience classes. It is best to use something like a milk bone to teach the pup to take a treat gently from your fingers. You can firmly hold part of the milk bone in your hand as you extend just a portion of the cookie towards your pup. (If this is a pet puppy, I recommend that you teach the pup to sit for the treat. But, for those in conformation, you can teach the same thing as the pups stands.) Slowly and evenly lower the treat towards the pup's mouth. If he jumps up or grabs at the treat, raise your hand (and the treat) slightly, saying saying "Gentle" or "Easy". Lower the treat once again towards the puppy's mouth. If he grabs again, raise your hand and repeat the command. Repeat this process until the puppy recognizes that he must not jump and that he must use caution with the force of his teeth. (Again, the concept here is that teeth must not touch the skin)

Once the pup will take the treat gently, you can teach him to release it on command. As the puppy reaches and begins to take the treat in his mouth, firmly tell him "Out" or "Give". If he jumps up, grumbles, or refuses to release the treat, be *firm!* (However, if you start this at an early age, the pup usually cooperates nicely.) Once the pup releases the treat nicely, praise him and reward with the goodie. (But, be sure his teeth do NOT touch your skin as you give that reward!) Be sure you do not make this a "Teasing" game. The purpose is to teach the pup to take the treat gently and to release the treat on command. It is important to praise and reward the desired behavior so the pup learns what you want.

Remember, what is contained in this article is just my personal opinions. I have found these methods successful for me. Writing these articles on Bringing Puppy Home has been great fun. The purpose is not to provide a written obedience class, but to give some helpful information for initial training on puppy manners. If any of you want me to address any other basics for puppies, I would be happy to do so. Otherwise, have fun with your puppies, and I will return one day when Editor, Julie Caruthers, comes up with a new idea that she would like me to write about.

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