



Biting

Games involving biting among puppies show them not to bite too hard, and therefore, avoid hurting each other. A puppy whose jaws are still underdeveloped is aware of the impact of his bites before even being able to bite at full strength. The more the puppy can play games that involve biting with other puppies or with people, the faster he will learn not to bite too hard. If the puppy lacks exposure to other dogs to learn to inhibit his biting, the master must take on this task. He will have to show the puppy to gradually eliminate biting from his habits by learning to be aware of the force of his bites. First, he must be shown not to bite too hard, and then led to get rid of this habit altogether. Most dog execute these two phases in sequence easily, some must do them simultaneously.



Caution : This exercise is not designed for older, aggressive dogs that have seriously bitten someone before.

Phase 1: Inhibiting the force of the bites

As soon as your dog starts biting you hard enough to hurt you, you must immediately imitate the reaction of a dog that just got bitten too hard by crying out "ooww!" with an assertive tone, without yelling. If the dog continues to bite, give him the VW "HEY!", and leave the room for one or two minutes. The dog will immediately construe that if he bites, he will be left alone. (In the canine world, if two dogs are roughhousing and one is bitten too hard, the latter will immediately cease playing, and will retreat to lick his wounds.) Then, go to him and resume play. When you play with your dog in this manner, it is best to choose a place

where you can retire momentarily to leave the dog alone. It is simpler than to have to bring the dog to the isolation area yourself. After playing the "PLAY / LEAVE / COME BACK" scenario for a few minutes, the dog will learn not to bite so hard if he wants to keep his play companion! Gradually lead your dog to decrease his biting, until all use of force with his jaws has been eliminated. From now on, every time the dog bites, imitate the "wounded dog sound ooww!", even if the dog is not hurting you at that moment. The dog must understand that each time he bites, he's hurting you.

Phase 2 : Getting rid of biting altogether

Your dog has now learned to touch you gently with his muzzle, and licking instead of biting. Now, the dog must learn that, sometimes, you don't feel like being touched at all. You will now teach your dog that it is acceptable to touch him, until you tell him otherwise. Surely, the dog will try to bite you during play period. When he does, tell him "ENOUGH". When he stops, give him the SR "SOUND + GOOD!" and redirect him towards another command. Give the command "ENOUGH" once more. When he stops, reward him with a piece of food. You can also feed him a part of his meal while you practice this exercise. As soon as the dog hears "ENOUGH!", he must immediately cease biting, and desist. If the dog doesn't let go immediately, give him the VW "HEY!", and leave the room. Return a few minutes later, give him a few commands. Avoid doing this exercise again for the rest of the day.

At this point in the education of your dog, he must never bite hard, and must cease all biting immediately on command. You can now show the dog not to touch people with his teeth. For example, a child enters the house and the dog starts to bite, immediately give the command "DON'T TOUCH!" to correct the behavior. For practice, do the exercise, gradually increasing the time period that the dog cannot bite, and then give him the release cue "O.K.". When the dog executes the sequence to your satisfaction, play with your dog by putting a little peanut butter on your hand, and by letting him lick your hand.

It is amusing to wrestle with a dog, but there must be some rules. We do not recommend this type of game for aggressive or fearful dogs. The aggressive dog could be led to believe he is superior. Here is another realistic scenario : a dog that has never bitten anyone in his life is eating and a child inadvertently hurts the

dog. If the dog wasn't properly conditioned, he could bite the child hard enough to seriously hurt him. Therefore, it is always best to engage in a non-aggressive game such as the retrieval of objects.