



Destructive Chewing

Chewing is a perfectly normal behavior for dogs. Dogs love to chew on bones and sticks and just about anything else available. They chew for fun, they chew for stimulation and exercise, and they chew to relieve anxiety.

But that's not it on the list of destructive behaviors. Dogs also steal things off the counters and tabletops, and they raid the trash. Most dogs prefer human food to dog food and, if given the opportunity, will help themselves. While these behaviors are normal, dogs can, of course, be taught to control themselves. Understand that your dog needs to be taught not to chew your things or steal your food—he's not born knowing that he shouldn't.

What to do:

- Provide the dog with plenty of his own toys and chew bones; introduce something new every day or two.
- Give the dog a "single serving" chew bone once or twice a day—something he will finish in one chew session.
- Identify the times of the day when your dog is likely to chew, and give him a stuffed Kong or a food puzzle. You can include some of his daily ration of food in the toy.
- Discourage chewing inappropriate items with chewing deterrents, such as Bitter Apple or Chew Guard*.
- Always supervise your dog. If you see him licking or chewing an item he shouldn't, say "uh uh," remove the item from his mouth and insert something that he can chew. Be sure to praise him.
- Crate your dog when you have to leave the house to prevent him practicing unwanted destructive behavior. If you can, pick up and put away items that your dog likes to chew so they can't reach them.
- If your dog does not want to redirect to a chew or toy when you catch them chewing on something inappropriate, try putting their leash on and keeping them with you. Reward them for behavior you like such as sitting or laying down, or chewing on an appropriate item.
- Make sure you give your dog plenty of exercise and training to help eliminate excess energy.

What NOT to do:

- Do not show the dog the damage and spank, scold, or punish him after the fact.
- Do not crate the dog for lengthy periods of time to prevent destructive chewing.

For AAWL adopters who need more information or if you have additional questions, please reach out to our support team at 602-273-6852 ext. 105