

## POINTS TO PAWNDER SERIES

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### Helping A Puppy Who Chews

Puppies, just like babies, go through a teething process. During this time, it's normal for puppies to want to chew objects (your shoes, that family heirloom rug, etc.) to ease discomfort on their gums, explore their environment through taste, and ease boredom. This is normal puppy behavior, and part of being a parent to an animal. Nonetheless, you should discourage this behavior, or your puppy may never outgrow it, and you may become so frustrated that you ultimately give him up, putting him at risk for euthanasia. Here are simple steps you can take to positively shape your puppy's behavior, so that he grows up into a well-behaved member of the family.

#### Puppy-Proof Your House



- Put the trash out of reach or in a container with a locking lid.
- Encourage children to keep their toys off the ground and out of your puppy's reach or in locked containers.
- Keep shoes, eyeglasses, TV remote controls, knick knacks, plants, and other small household items out of reach.
- Supervise your puppy when you are home – don't let him wander off into rooms where he can find items to chew.
- When you're not home, your puppy should be confined to a small, safe area, where he cannot chew or choke on household items. You can crate-train your puppy, or use baby gates to keep him confined to your bathroom or some other room you've made "puppy proof."
  - But remember, puppies under five months of age should not be confined to a crate for longer than four-hour blocks, as they may not be able to control their bowels or bladders for longer than that.

#### Make Inappropriate Chew Items Unpleasant To Your Puppy

- Coat furniture and other items you can't put out of reach with a product like "Bitter Apple" (available at nearly any pet store).

#### Don't Confuse Your Puppy

- DO NOT let your puppy play with old socks, shoes or children's toys. If you let him play with these old items, how can you possibly expect him to know that it's wrong for him to play with your good shoes, socks, etc?

#### Give Your Puppy Appropriate Toys

- Provide your puppy with plenty of durable dog toys. MAKE SURE the toys don't have parts your puppy can tear off and choke on or ingest (like metal balls, plastic eyes, etc.). Remember, just like a baby, your puppy can choke to death on small pieces.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider buying at least one toy that you can stuff with food (KONG toys are recommended by many veterinarians and trainers, and can be found at nearly any pet store). If you put food inside a toy, it will keep your puppy focused on trying to get it out, rather than chewing on inappropriate household objects.</li> <li>• Change your puppy's toys occasionally. Like babies, puppies become bored with the same toys. So give your puppy three or four toys for a few days, then take them away and give him three or four different toys, and keep rotating.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spend Plenty Of Time With Your Puppy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your puppy can only learn when you spend time with him! So spend plenty of positive time with him, playing with him and taking walks. Often, it's boredom that leads to chewing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>When You Catch Your Puppy Chewing . . .</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you catch your puppy chewing on something he shouldn't, do the following, <b>at the moment you catch him:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Interrupt the behavior with a loud noise, like saying "no" in a firm voice.</li> <li>➤ Take away the inappropriate item your puppy is chewing.</li> <li>➤ Immediately hand your puppy an acceptable, durable chew toy.</li> <li>➤ Praise your puppy when he takes the acceptable chew toy in his mouth.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Important Note:</b> NEVER scold your puppy after the fact. Unless you catch your puppy in the act of chewing, you're TOO LATE to scold him. A puppy simply does NOT have the ability to understand why you're scolding him unless it occurs right at the moment that he's engaging in the behavior.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Keep A Healthy Sense Of Perspective</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember, puppies chew! It's normal behavior.</li> <li>• But all the same, you do need to be vigilant in using positive steps like those above to help your puppy grow out of it, so that he can remain a cherished member of the family for many years to come!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggested Reading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Humane Society of the United States, "Puppy Chewing," <a href="http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/our_pets_for_life_program/dog_behavior_tip_sheets/puppy_chewing.html">http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/our_pets_for_life_program/dog_behavior_tip_sheets/puppy_chewing.html</a></li> <li>• Purina Puppy Chow, "Chewing," <a href="http://www.puppychow.com/content/index.aspx?intCategoryID=1&amp;intContentID=37">http://www.puppychow.com/content/index.aspx?intCategoryID=1&amp;intContentID=37</a></li> <li>• ASPCA, "Destructive Behavior," <a href="http://www.aspc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nyc_dogdestructive">http://www.aspc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nyc_dogdestructive</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Important Note:</b> Indiana-PAW's POINTS TO PAWNDER SERIES is intended to provide quick tips to help citizens address common pet health and behavior questions. It is <u>not</u> intended to replace consultation with one's veterinarian and/or a trained behavior specialist.</p>	