



# Destructive Behavior & Chew Training



## Dogs of all ages chew

Chewing is a vital behavior that keeps dogs jaws and teeth healthy. Luckily, we can train them to chew on appropriate things! The behavior we humans consider destructive is most often normal dog behavior that we can give safe outlets for.

While occasionally destructive behavior and chewing may be a sign of separation anxiety, it is most often simply a sign of boredom and incomplete training. It is NEVER a sign of spite, retaliation for you leaving them alone, or "dominance."

## What to do when your dog has destructive behavior:

- Give them more supervision.
- Reward them for behaviors that aren't destructive.
  - Drop a few treats at their feet when they are relaxing calmly.
  - Encourage them when they play or chew on their toys.
- Give them more exercise and enrichment opportunities.

## Train them what to chew on:

1. Have a variety of things for your dog to chew. All dogs are different and will have their preferences. Dogs should have both inedible and edible chew options daily.



- **EDIBLE CHEWS:** Bully sticks, pig ears, rawhide alternatives, tracheas, food stuffed inedible chews.
- **INEDIBLE CHEWS:** gorilla wood, split antlers, rope toys, durable nylon or polymer chew toys designed to last.
- These are not exhaustive lists. Consider your dog's age and dental health when choosing chew options.

2. Gently redirect any unwanted chewing and learn from it.
  - Interrupt the unwanted chewing with a kissing sound and trade them for an appropriate chew item.
  - What was the dog chewing? Can you get them an appropriate chew that mimics the texture or taste of what they were chewing?
  - If you have to take something out of a dog's mouth, first see if they will drop it by offering them some tasty treats.
  - How can you prevent them from accessing the "forbidden" thing they were chewing on?
3. Passive Training: this is limiting options so that your dog has **ONLY** appropriate things to chew on, especially when you aren't around to redirect.
  - When your dog is alone leave them in a dog proofed space with a variety of things to chew and **NOTHING** we wouldn't want them to chew.
  - With continued practice choosing appropriate things to chew, the dog will continue to make good decisions even once there are more options.



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