

PUPPY PLAY BITING

What is it?

Puppies are little biting machines. They bite things that move, things that don't move, each other, your hands, your feet or anything. Not only is this normal, it is an important part of their development. When puppies play, they learn from their playmates' yelps and body language when a bite is too hard. Over time, a puppy figures out how to use her mouth more gently (inhibit her bite) to keep play going.

How to teach your puppy to bite more softly.

*Hard bites should result in a time-out. Stop play, and leave your puppy alone or put her in a time-out for one minute.

*Each week ask your puppy to bite a little softer by timing her out for her hardest bites.

*Don't phase out play biting all together until your puppy is reliably biting softly. They you can re-direct her to toys or time out for all bites.

Rate how hard your puppy bites:

1. You can feel it, but barely.
2. There's some pressure, but you barely flinch.
3. Wow, those little teeth are sharp, but it is tolerable.
4. Ok. That hurts a bit. It might even leave a mark
5. Ack! That hurts and your hand is now bleeding

For one week, time your puppy out if she gives you a level 5 bite and be ready to deliver a time-out if necessary. For example, when playing tug, when your puppy is excited about something and when you come home from work.