



Puppy Socialization and Manners: Teaching a Soft Mouth

With Mouthing/Nipping

- When your puppy bites at your body, clothes or hair choose the hardest bites first
- As soon as the nip occurs, respond immediately with a loud “ouch!”
- Simultaneously withdraw attention immediately. Stop playing, moving, interacting with or even looking at your puppy! He is suddenly a ghost!
- After 30-45 seconds, turn back to your puppy and ask for a calm “sit” and continue with your play
- As your puppy learns not to bite so hard switch to reacting to weaker bites, weaning your puppy down until he is barely applying any pressure!

If It Doesn't Work: If saying ouch and withdrawing attention doesn't work, say ouch loudly and immediately stand out and walk out of the room, closing the door behind you! Wait 30-45 seconds and return, ask for a nice sit and resume playing .

Make sure you are setting your puppy up for success with appropriate play! Rough housing encourages nipping and creates arousal. Reserve rough and tumble play for toys and other puppies!

With Food

- Pinch a treat or piece of kibble between your fingers and present it to your puppy so he can smell and lick the treat but not eat it
- If you feel teeth on your hand at all, do not release the treat
- As soon as your puppy licks instead of bites, mark it, and let him eat the treat, immediately!

If it Doesn't Work: If your puppy keeps on biting for the treat try adding an ouch! And simultaneously pulling your hand away, removing the treat. Wait a few seconds and offer the treat again.

With Toys

- Engage your puppy in a game of tug!
- If your puppy misses the toy and grabs your hand, give a loud ouch! Immediately let your arm go slack and don't tug anymore. Don't drop the toy, but simply stop playing –one sided tug is no fun!
- Withdraw attention as well, look up at the ceiling and don't speak for 30-45 seconds
- Ask your puppy to drop the toy, then restart play

If it Doesn't Work: If your puppy grabs your hand again, try saying ouch, drop the toy immediately and walk out of the room, closing the door behind you. Return after 30-45 seconds, pick the toy back up and resume playing.

Tug is an exciting game, but getting too worked up will make your puppy a little careless. If he is continuing to nip your hand, lower the intensity of the game tugging more gently while training.