

## Tips for Managing Your Dog's Chewing Habit

Inappropriate chewing usually occurs either because your dog is bored, or your dog just doesn't know any better! The key is to provide your dog with an enriching environment filled with appropriate chew toys so he doesn't resort to chewing on things like the couch or your favorite pair of shoes.

***Never punish your dog for inappropriate chewing.*** Rather, restrict his access to these objects and reward him when he DOES chew appropriate toys.

Here are some tips for teaching your dog to recognize an appropriate chew toy, and making him want to chew on these objects.

### Step 1.

Remove, or restrict access to, inappropriate chewing objects in the environment (understanding that some objects, like couches, may not be possible to remove). Don't give your dog the opportunity to chew on these objects, especially in the beginning of training.

### Step 2.

Teach your dog what is an appropriate chew toy! The best kinds are tough, rubber, indestructible, and hollow. Create positive associations with these toys by giving your dog's meals around or even inside of the toy. Kongs are a good example. Place your dog's kibble inside the Kong, perhaps with some liver paste, and then top it off with peanut butter. This will give your dog a fun activity and make him work for his food. When beginning these associations, provide ALL meals in or around the toys.

### Step 3.

Teach your dog to bring chew toys to you and reward him for doing so. This will teach your dog that the chew toy = rewards!

Understand that creating these positive associations with appropriate chew toys can take days, weeks, or months depending on the individual dog.

### Step 4.

Provide lots of different rubber toys and rotate your dog's selection regularly to keep them fresh and interesting.



## Step 5.

Still not working? Make sure your dog is getting enough exercise. A bored dog with excess energy may be destructive if not stimulated enough.

- Provide at least one long walk each day (15-30 minutes depending on the dog). Two walks are ideal with potty breaks spread out during the day.
- Provide a fenced-in-yard.
- Consider doggy day care facilities to keep your dog active all day long.
- Bring your dog to Animal Friends' canine socials. (Learn more at [www.ThinkingOutsideTheCage.org](http://www.ThinkingOutsideTheCage.org).)
- Visit the dog park.
- Play frisbee!
- Take a behavior training class. Animal Friends offers a wide range of classes.
  - o Training creates a strong bond between owner and dog.
  - o Training helps build confidence and makes your dog feel good about completing a job well done!
  - o Practice your training techniques daily.

Remember, ALWAYS use positive reinforcement techniques! Never punish a dog for chewing or other destructive behaviors. Punishment can lead to new adverse behaviors, such as anxiety and fear.

For more information on classes and training visit [www.ThinkingOutsideTheCage.org](http://www.ThinkingOutsideTheCage.org)

