

negative behaviors care sheet



It may seem cute when your puppy play bites, barks at inappropriate times, or practices other destructive behaviors, but it is important to stop these behaviors before they progress to more serious habits.



barking

Barking is not always a bad thing, however it is considered inappropriate if your puppy barks at visitors. Encouraging your puppy to bring you or your visitor a “gift” when they are excited can discourage barking. For example, dogs that enjoy retrieving often show their contentment by carrying a toy in their mouth. By doing so, they are naturally unable to bark. Be careful not to give a toy to your puppy while barking is in progress to avoid the confusion of giving the puppy a reward. Avoid yelling at your puppy to discourage barking; your puppy may think that you are barking with them, only supporting their behavior.



play biting

It is normal for puppies to mouth each other while playing, however when the mouthing turns into more painful biting, the puppy on the receiving end will yelp. This sound will startle the biting puppy causing him to release. Humans can use this technique to teach a puppy when their biting has gotten out of hand. When your puppy latches on too hard, allow your hand to go limp and imitate a yelping sound. As soon as the puppy releases, ignore the puppy for up to 20 seconds, then you can resume play. Redirecting your puppy’s attention can also help. When the puppy tries to mouth you, pull your hand away before contact and provide a treat or wave around a toy until he bites that instead. Playing games like tug-of-war or fetch can also satisfy your urge to mouth things. Physical punishment, like grabbing of the muzzle, should never be used as it is never effective and can be damaging to the puppy.



digging

There are many reasons to why your puppy may feel the need to start digging. It may be an instinctual hunting method, they are trying to alleviate boredom, or could be simply looking for a spot to cool down. If your puppy is trying to alleviate boredom, try providing them with more forms of exercise. You can also try providing a designated spot for the puppy to dig by loosening the soil and burying some of the puppy’s favorite toys. If the puppy seems to be digging to go after prey, you may need to restrict your puppy’s access to the area until the prey is removed. During the warmer months, make sure that your puppy has a spot to stay cool to avoid a reason for your puppy to dig. A shaded area like a patio or dog house is a perfect place for your puppy to cool off.



chewing

It is normal for your puppy to chew, but it is important to direct their chewing away from furniture and other household objects. Puppies don’t know instinctively the difference between what is a good and bad object to chew. Remove or temporarily store items from the house that you don’t want your puppy to chew. For example, keep shoes and clothing out of the puppy’s reach. For larger items like furniture, you can apply a chewing repellent spray. Keep a close eye on your puppy, and redirect them to appropriate chewing objects if they begin chewing on inappropriate items. Providing your puppy with chew toys, especially during the teething period (3 to 6 months of age) and always make sure they get more than enough exercise to prevent boredom.

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