

# Teaching your new puppy the right way to play



## NIPPING BAD PLAY BEHAVIOR IN THE BUD

If your puppy plays inappropriately, here are the right ways to handle it.

- Distract the bad behavior. Always have a toy on hand that your puppy can transfer its attention to.
- Speak up and step out. If your puppy is biting hard, yell "Ouch!" and stop playing.
- Interrupt problem behaviors. A shake can or a water gun will startle puppies and stop the behavior. But don't use these techniques if a pet has a sensitive temperament or if they seem to make things worse.
- Set up a dragline. Both indoors and outdoors during supervised play, put the puppy on a leash that you can quickly grab to stop the behavior.
- Use head halters. These halters provide a more natural sense of control than ordinary collars do and limit the chances of biting.
- Consider muzzles. In extreme cases, muzzles may be used for short periods to prevent the biting behavior.
- Give the puppy a time out. If your puppy won't stop a bad behavior, put it in a room or in its kennel with toys to keep it busy until it calms down.

## WHAT NOT TO DO

You and your family should never use physical punishment, such as scruff shakes, alpha rollovers, squeezing the puppy to the floor, thumping its nose, or swatting.

## Monkey in the middle: An exercise in obedience

This game not only exercises energetic puppies, it also reinforces the basic commands of "sit" and "come," enhances name recognition, and teaches a puppy to run up and sit to get attention (instead of jumping up on people). At least two people are needed, and each person should have six to 12 small treats (regular puppy dinner kibble is usually adequate) at hand.

The two people sit opposite each other with about five to six feet in between. The first person calls "Skippy, come" in a high-pitched, upbeat voice. As the puppy approaches, the first person has the puppy sit for a treat. Immediately, the second person calls "Skippy, come" in a high-pitched, upbeat voice and has the puppy sit for a treat. Immediately, the first person calls again and has the puppy sit for a treat, and so on.

The distance between the two people can increase as the puppy becomes accustomed to the game—the people can even move into separate rooms, increasing the strength of the "come" command and the exertion needed to obtain a treat.



Remember, everybody wins when you take the time and effort to teach your new puppy how to play appropriately. You'll gain a well-behaved pet, and the puppy is more likely to remain a happy, important part of the family.

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