

The Focus Guide to Puppy Biting



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Why are they biting?

“Puppy biting hurts. It can be overwhelming and difficult to deal with but we promise it is absolutely normal for your puppy to be biting you. They are just trying to work out how to interact with the world in the only way they know how.”

Puppies explore the world with their mouths so some biting is normal. However if their biting is particularly intense it's likely to be caused by one of the following reasons

- **They're over tired**

Puppies need 18 - 20 hours sleep a day. If you've lived with a toddler you'll know how over tiredness can wreak havoc on emotional regulation and impulse control.

- **They're overstimulated**

There are lots of new things to learn and experience for puppies and they can get overstimulated very quickly. Make sure to balance excitement with calm activities.

- **They're understimulated**

Puppies might not need big walks but they do need mental stimulation like scent work or trick or training.

- **They have an unmet need**

They may be trying to tell you they are hungry, thirsty, or need the toilet. Extreme biteyness can also be linked to gastrointestinal discomfort so it could be they need a diet change or a vet check.

- **They're uncomfortable**

If they bite you while you're grooming them, picking them up, petting them, putting on collars etc. then they may be telling you they're not comfortable.

Preventing the witching hour

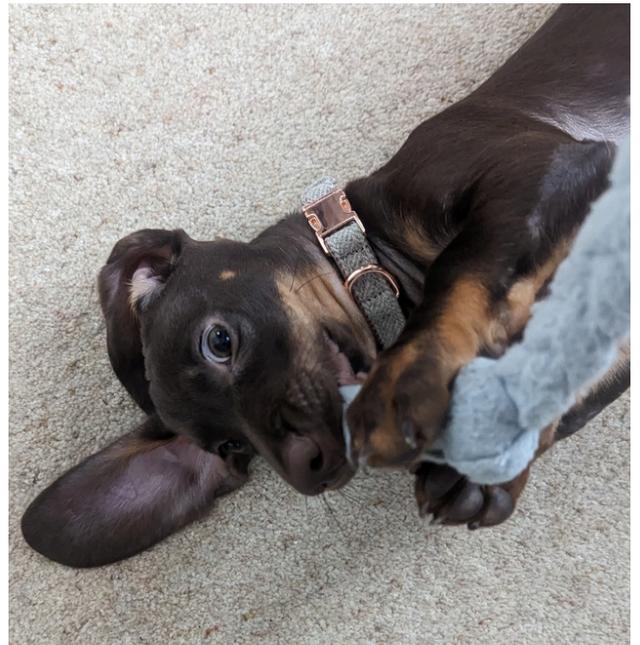
“The witching hour is that time of day were your puppy goes particularly crazy and gets super bitey. Here are some ways to prevent it and reduce it’s intensity.”

1 Sleep

The more tired your puppy is the more they will bite. Work on encouraging them to sleep for at least 18 hours a day and we promise the biting will reduce.

2 Be proactive

If your puppy goes loopy at 7pm then at 6.45pm you’re going to give them an appropriate outlet for thier energy. This might be searching for treats in the garden, playing some scent games or doing some trick training. You’re then going to follow this up with a calming activity that they can do by themselves such as a long lasting chew, a lickimat, or a stuffed Kong.



3 Balance arousal

Make sure exciting activities are followed by calming ones. Think, licking, chewing and sniffing. This will prevent them tipping over into the red zone and the more we practise it with them the more they learn to do this themselves,

What to do when the biting starts

“Your puppy is going to bite you, its one of lifes many certainties. What you do when that happens will either reduce, or increase the likelihood that it will happen again.”

● Switch focus

Calmly remove whatever they're biting and offer them something else to bite (A tuggy toy or an edible chew is usually a good option).

● Check needs

If switching focus wasn't enough, check if they need to go to the toilet, are they hungry? Do they need a drink.

● Remove access

If you've done the above they likely need to sleep. Pop them in their pen or crate with something to chew/lick to help them settle. If they struggle being away from you sit next to the crate/pen but keep your hands away.

What we don't need to do... You may have been told to shout 'no' or yelp like a puppy. This will either get your puppy more amped up which will make them bite you more, or it will make them scared of you which will mean they don't want to hang out with you in future.

Remember they're just trying to communicate with you.





Our favourite chews for teething puppies

“Puppies and dogs **need** to chew, it’s an essential part of their wellbeing”

- **Carrots:** A healthy snack with good crunch, you can freeze them to boost their soothing affect on gums
- **Coffee and Olive Wood chews:** These are designed to be anti splinter so they’re safe for puppies to chew. These are great for dogs who like to chomp on furniture
- **Natural Chews:** For small puppies dried rabbit ears and chicken feet are a great natural chew option. For bigger pups or heavy chewers try beef tails, trachea and hooves. Pork products tend to be high in fat and can upset sensitive puppy bellies. Stay away from rawhide or overly processed chews.
- **Stuffable toys:** Kongs are the most popular but we find toppls are better for small pups as they’re not quite as challenging. Start off easy and gradually increase the difficulty.

Simple scentwork

“Play this just before that witching hour!”

You'll need three similar items to put treats under. Sports cones, paper cups, plastic cups, or small plant pots will all work for this.

How to Play:

- 1 Ask your dog to sit and wait or have someone hold them. Lay your three items out in a line in front of them a few feet away.
- 2 Pretend to hide a treat under each item, but only place a treat under one.
- 3 Step back from the cones/cups and tell your dog to 'find it'.
- 4 Celebrate with them when they've found the treat and re-set. If you can tell they know where the treat is but they're struggling to get it out from under the cup/cone help them out by lifting it up for them.

To make this harder:

- Move the cups further and further apart
- Have your dog in another room while you hide the treat
- Hide the treat without the cones

