



Dog Training & Behavior Services

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## Prevention of Problem Behaviors:

Preventing problem behaviors in dogs is much easier than fixing them after the fact. For that reason I am providing you with some specific tips to be sure your puppy does not develop these behavioral issues:

### Resource Guarding:

When your dog makes a decision that he doesn't want to share anymore, it can be a very difficult moment. You trust your dog, but now he is making you nervous with his growls & snarls. Prevention is the best medicine for resource guarding. Here are a few steps to be sure your puppy is happy to have you around his prize possessions.

1. Always practice trades for valuable objects. If you are just constantly taking things away, your pup won't think you

are very much fun to play with. Play fetch with two balls, as your puppy drops the first you can throw the second. When your puppy has a bone, you may need to provide a highly tempting treat such as hot dog or cheese to convince him to give up the bone. After bone time is over, consider doing something else with your dog so the fun doesn't just suddenly come to an end.

2. Walk by your dog while they are eating and simply toss them a few treats while they are eating. You may also drop a spoonful of wet food into their bowl. This will make them see your approach as a very positive thing. Watch for your pup freezing, growling or snarling while you do this. If you see these behaviors, consult a trainer or behaviorist for help. You should also look for help if your dog is guarding from other dogs.

**Trainer Tip:** If you see any type of behavioral issue developing in your puppy, don't wait months or years to address it! Behaviors can be changed much more easily when your dog hasn't practiced them for a long period of time and gotten good at them. As with humans, dogs are creatures of habit and can get set in their ways.



### Separation Anxiety:

The best way to prevent separation anxiety is to simply practice leaving for short periods of time, gradually increasing how long you are gone from the day you bring your puppy home. Many people get puppies in the summer when the kids are home from school or when they have time off work, then spend every waking minute with the puppy. When all of a sudden they go back to their regular schedule of being gone 6-8 hours a day, this is very stressful for your puppy. Do you pup a favor and even if you don't need to, leave the puppy for short periods of time. Eventually you may not be able to be home all the time and your puppy will struggle to adjust to the change.

### Counter Surfing & Begging for Food:

Counter surfing refers to your dog jumping on the counter and eating or stealing things they should not have. The best way to prevent this behavior is to simply not leave tempting food items on the counter. Once your dog has learned that good things can be found up there, they will continue to check to see if there is anything good.

Another tip is to be sure that you never feed your dog from the counter or table. If it is important to you to feed your dog human food, simply place the tasty treat into your dogs bowl.

### Jumping up for Greetings:

I can not stress how important it is to teach your dog from day one that jumping

up on you will not get him the attention he is seeking. When puppies are small, we don't mind them putting their paws on us and often even encourage it. But as they get bigger, this behavior is not as cute anymore. Instead of confusing your dog follow this one rule:

My dog will ONLY receive praise, petting, treats and attention when he has all four paws on the floor. The moment the paws leave the floor, I will turn away, walk away, or even go behind a closed door if he is persistent.

You do not need to say anything to your dog, your body language says it all. Jumping earns humans walking away, paws on the floor earns attention. Simple as that! Consistency is vital! Do it EVERY TIME!

[www.LuckyPawsMN.com](http://www.LuckyPawsMN.com)



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### Nipping & Play Biting

#### Two Primary Reasons Puppies Nip

- In a playful or attention seeking-manner.
- In order to get us to stop doing something (such as handling them in a particular way they don't enjoy).

It is important to recognize why the dog seems to be nipping because we treat the situations differently. It takes time, usually 1-2 weeks to see a noticeable change in this behavior. It can also get worse before it gets better. This is called an extinction burst. The reason this can happen is because the behavior previously got the dog what it wanted, and since its not working anymore they will try harder to get it to work until eventually they realize it just won't work. We can speed up this process by helping them learn how to do things properly, not only punishing bad behavior. Keep reading to learn how to solve your nipping issues.

#### Play or Attention Seeking

Squeal or yipe as if the dog hurt you and ignore and/or move away from the dog – for some dogs this noise creates more excitement, in which case you should try another option.

Give the dog a no reward marker (such as “Ah, Ah!” or “No!”) and immediately remove your attention & ignore the dog.

Give the dog a no reward marker (such as “Ah, Ah!” or “No!”) and immediately remove the dog to a time-out location. The ideal time-out location would be a bathroom or other small room close by. The time-out only lasts 10-15

seconds (or until the dog is quiet), so often that doesn't give the dog time to get into things in that room. If your dog is particularly interested in stealing things, use a room without fun things to steal or if needed you can use a crate. It's important to carefully consider using the crate as a time-out location. I recommend having a sleeping crate and a separate time-out crate whenever possible. While many dogs can use a crate for time-outs without issue, some develop issues with the crate because of this. It's important to know your dog and make a decision based on your individual dog).

#### To stop handling, grooming etc

It's important for puppies to learn that nipping doesn't get them what they want, but calm behavior does in this situation. If your pup begins nipping while you are holding him, hold on until he relaxes, then let him go.

It's just as important to make sure we make grooming/handling experiences as positive as possible. Give the dog treats while you groom & handle to help them make positive associations with grooming and handling. Do this before the nipping starts.

### Stealing Items

Some dogs steal items to invoke a game of chase, while others steal things to chew or ingest. Depending on your situation, stealing will be handled differently.

If your dog is known to ingest items, this can be a life threatening behavior and immediate training & management should be put in place. A lot of work on “Leave It” & “Drop” will help as well as practicing trades (although this can lead to stealing for the option to trade after



some time in smart pups). Managing the pups environment is also important. You should also discuss with your vet why your dog may be eating non-food items. Could it be diet related.

If your dog is stealing items, but not being destructive of them, the ideal way to curb this behavior is to simply ignore the stealing. Once your pup learns that stealing doesn't lead to a fun game of chase, they will likely stop stealing items.

If your dog is stealing items to chew, consider that he may need some additional chew toys of his own that are more engaging. Try filling Kong type toys with treats or peanut butter or use other treat dispensing toys. You can even feed full meals from these types of toys.

**Remember, a tired dog is a good dog, so increase exercise to be sure your pup isn't stealing things due to boredom.**

