



Mouthing

Puppies spend a lot of time nipping at each other, so it is no surprise that your puppy thinks this normal puppy play is all right with you. Puppies learn to inhibit their bites and have a soft mouth when playing with canine playmates, so he must also learn to inhibit and have a soft mouth when playing with humans. Each time your puppy bites is another opportunity to remind him how sensitive human skin is. With this in mind we don't want to tell puppies to stop biting altogether until we are sure they have learnt to use their mouth very gently. So before we stop our puppies biting altogether we must teach them that human flesh is very sensitive, much more so than their littermate's skin.



Start playing with your puppy, when your puppy goes to mouth you, respond to a little nip with "ouch!" wait a few moments, then play again. The next nip from your puppy should be softer, if not, say "ouch!" and walk out of the room and leave your puppy by itself for a few minutes.



Simply leaving the room is the most effective punishment for puppies who don't back off when you say "ouch." You are saying to your puppy he will be left by himself and you won't play with him if he isn't gentle with your skin.



When you return to your puppy play with them again and repeat the above and gradually decrease the pressure of the bite.



After a week of teaching your dog to have a gentle mouth the next step is to stop him mouthing altogether.



We do this by doing the same as we did for teaching our puppies to have a soft mouth, we simply meet any teeth on our skin with an "ouch!" and end the play session if the puppy doesn't stop mouthing us.