

PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR

Chewing is a normal behaviour for dogs. While most dogs will grow out of destructive chewing, it can develop into a real problem when your belongings are damaged or completely destroyed.

POSSIBLE CAUSES

- ▶ Inquisitive exploration – mouths are the most sensitive part of a puppy, so they learn the most about something by putting it in their mouth
- ▶ Teething - chewing helps their little teeth break through the gums and relieves the pain
- ▶ Bored or lack of exercise
- ▶ Medical conditions - especially if they are swallowing the items
- ▶ Aggressive territorial behavior directed at doors, windows, fences or gates
- ▶ Separation anxiety – destruction only occurs when separated from the owner
- ▶ Fear of noises or thunderstorm – destruction only occurs when noise or thunderstorm is present.

TREATMENT

The type of treatment depends on the cause:

- ▶ **If there is no anxiety or fear, treatment is often successful:**
 - Increase the amount of daily exercise and walks
 - Regularly give them new toys. Food oriented toys are often the best
 - Keep them in a supervised environment
 - Paint objects with commercially available bitter tasting products.
- ▶ **If your dog is anxious, treatment can be more complex:**
 - Do not punish, as it will make it worse
 - Do not leave them alone if destruction occurs when you're away
 - Avoid noises and be alert to thunderstorms, firework displays etc.
 - See your vet or animal behaviorist.



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