

Dog Growls When Tired

A Shih Tzu puppy growls and bares her teeth when picked up.

By September B. Morn

Q. When we pick up our 11-week-old Yorkshire Terrier-Shih Tzu mix puppy she frequently growls and shows her teeth. I think she does this mostly when she's tired. What can we do to curb this behavior?

A. If she only does this when she's tired, she's probably just feeling cranky, so be especially gentle with her at those times. At 11 weeks, she's also teething, and that can make a puppy more irritable than usual. If she growls when you pick her up, stay calm and don't make an issue of it. Pause for a moment, take a breath and let her relax, then calmly continue what you were doing and finish picking her up.

Sometimes dogs resist being picked up because it's uncomfortable for them. Here's a way to lift a puppy that's secure and comfortable: Tell the dog you're going to pick her up before you do it - don't suddenly swoop her up in your arms. Using both hands, support her securely under her rear end and chest. Keep her spine fairly level, parallel to the ground, as you lift her. Pull her in to your stomach and chest as you lift, so she can lean into the support of your body.