

Problem Puppy Chews and Has Accidents

Keep your puppy in close quarters, with proper chew toys.

By September Morn

Q. We just got a puppy. He's a 3-month-old German Shepherd mix and has chewed up two cell phone chargers and the cords to my computer speakers. It happens at night when we are asleep, because during the day he is outside with our other dog. How do I get him to stop chewing on things? We're also having trouble housetraining him. He'll leave the living room when we're right there watching television, and go into another room and pee. Any tips?

A. A 3-month-old puppy simply isn't old enough or wise enough to safely leave loose in your house while everyone is sleeping. He is at a teething stage now, and losing his baby teeth. Also, at this age, pups typically learn about things by chewing on them. So it's a small miracle that he hasn't chewed up even more stuff. He won't be finished teething for several more months, so don't expect him to stop chewing for a while.

The best way to teach your pup not to tooth-test whatever he finds is to guide him back to an appropriate teething toy whenever he chews the wrong thing. Obviously, there's no way to do that while you're asleep, so confine your puppy at night to keep both him and your furnishings safe.

After taking your puppy outside for his last potty trip of the evening, bed him down in a sleeping crate, a folding pen he can't escape, or a room you've diligently puppy-proofed. Leave a puppy toy or two with him when you confine him for the night, so when he wakes and feels that natural urge to gnaw, he'll have something that's appropriate to chew.