

## Dog Nipping and Biting

**Learn how to curb your dog's nipping and biting problem.**

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Posted: Tue Jan 15 00:00:00 PST 2002

Dog #3: Doberman/Mix, female, 8 months I have two cats and one husband in addition to this puppy monster. She still bites and jumps up. I think she's trying to get attention, but how do I break her of this? I know she's excited, but the biting and jumping has got to go. Dobbies are smart, extremely fast and sensitive. Take immediate steps since at 8 months your Dobe has learned that listening is optional and that jumping and mouthing elicits attention from you.

I think you are dealing with two issues here: First, the behaviors she has learned that are unwanted; and second, the desirable behaviors she has been taught. At 8 months, she is rapidly growing out of puppyhood into adulthood. Training is not an option with this breed; it's a must.

Your ability to keep calm and composed is critical, especially with a jumping, mouthing and spinning Dobe. Start by directing your dog to "Sit" or "Down," rewarding her with a treat. Ask her to "Sit" at doorways, before being petted, and before she is fed. Use the "Down" command in every situation possible; the more frequent you use the command, the better the response. Not all dogs are food-motivated so use a leash with a flat or martingale collar for assistance. If you tell her to "sit" and she does not respond, gradually add pressure on the lead as you gently push down and back on her rear. Be generous in praise and reward when she obeys.

Keep your dog on lead for the next two weeks to ensure you can control her actions. At 8 months, she has learned to ignore you. The lead will give you the ability to convince her that when you direct she responds.

Ignore the jumping by turning away and folding your arms; reward with a treat when she sits. Also, make sure no one is petting her when she jumps.

A word of caution here: You can correct the unwanted behaviors, but the key to any good training is rewarding desired behaviors. The American Kennel Club offers the Canine Good Citizen Test that would be great for you to achieve. Dobs love to work and take to training extremely well.

Search out some trainers in your area for private or group lessons in obedience or agility. Whatever approach they use (as long as it is not abusive) is OK if you have a dog that enthusiastically responds to one-word commands. Be sure they use a number of approaches to achieve the results both of you are capable of.

The fun here is teaching your Dobe that she will receive attention when she is polite. Training takes time and work but it is well worth the effort. I know your cats and husband will appreciate your accomplishments with your dog.

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