

10 Problem Dog and Puppy Behaviors

Uncover the causes of 10 common complaints from new puppy owners.

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Running Away Some breeds are prone to roaming. Step one to avoiding a pup with wanderlust get it neutered. This can do wonders to stop a roaming male. Other ways to discourage your canine traveler: Teach a diehard reliable recall; never, ever chase your dog; provide it with plenty of exercise and mental stimulation; and, if all else fails, invest in a foolproof fence.

Chewing Oh, those canine chompers! They'll be the death of pet owners, yet. It's amazing how much destruction those tiny teeth have wrought. No. 1 rule for discouraging chewing: Provide lots of super fun chew toys. Make sure they are toys your pup likes. If it doesn't like plush toys, offer a rope toy or nylon bone. If that doesn't work, get serious with a peanut butter-filled Kong, knucklebone or pig hoof. When you catch pup gnawing on no-chew items, simply remove the item with a firm, calm "no," then offer one of pup's chew toys with a "good dog" when it accepts it. Pulling on Leash Unfortunately, pups with this problem often do not receive enough exercise. Even if they do get walks, both owner and pooch are frustrated with their blocks-long battles. Accustom your pup to being on a leash right away. Teach it that a loose leash is rewarded with forward movement and that pulling only gets it stuck in one spot. When pup pulls, stop. If pup continues to pull, turn around and walk in another direction. Be consistent with this, and your dog will quickly learn what behavior is rewarded with a pleasurable excursion. For pups that continue to pull, try a head halter. The head halter will simply turn the dog around when it tries to pull. As an added benefit, the head halter exerts pressure on the top of the snout, which calms dogs and even decreases aggression.

Dog-dog Aggression Socialize is the word of the day! Once dog aggression is established, it's difficult to train it away. Prevent aggression from the start by socializing your pup with dogs of all types, sizes and ages. A pup with plenty of non-threatening, fun and safe canine experiences will usually love other dogs. Don't let your pup pick up on your stress when meeting other dogs. Keep the leash slack and be jolly.

Getting on Furniture Establish furniture rules from the start and be consistent. If you don't want your puppy on your furniture as an adult, don't allow it on furniture as a pup: This is the key to fur-free furniture. If pup sneaks up onto furniture, simply lift it off with a firm "no," and place it on the floor, then reward with affection and a treat or toy.