

## 10 Problem Dog and Puppy Behaviors

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

*Kristin Mehus-Roe*

**Housebreaking Accidents** Using the bathroom in the house is a time-honored tradition in the puppy world. But, there is hope for your pup. With positive reinforcement for using the potty outside, and vigilance combined with cratetraining to prevent indoor mishaps, your pup will be housetrained in no time. For those unavoidable accidents, be sure to clean thoroughly with an odor neutralizer, or your pup will seek out that spot again.

**Digging** Digging is a common problem for dog owners. Most dogs dig out of boredom and frustration, so make sure your pup gets plenty of exercise, mental stimulation and affection. If your pooch tends to target a specific area, try burying some of its own feces in the spot, or bury chicken wire to create an unpleasant sensation. Some dogs were just born to dig. Terriers, in particular, were bred to tunnel after vermin it's hard to fight genetics. The best you can do is supply a soft-earthed digging spot in your backyard and teach your digging dog that this is the proper place to expend that excess energy. Terrier owners recommend building a sandbox, then burying tasty treats to encourage your dog to dig there, instead of your flower garden.

**Nipping** Ouch! Those puppy teeth hurt. Most puppies nip, so it's your job to teach them to control that bite. Littermates will teach each other some bite restraint but hard biters are not popular playmates but you'll have to expand on that learning once pup is in your home. When pup nips, say, "Ow!" in a voice loud enough to startle it. Make the pitch lower if your exclamation seems to provoke more nipping. Give the pup love when the nips stop. Another method is to gently push your fingers farther into the pup's mouth when it nips. It will not like this sensation and quickly associates nipping with an unpleasant feeling.

**Barking** If you've ever lived next door to a barking dog, you know how aggravating this behavior is. Like digging, most dogs bark out of boredom and frustration. The best way to address the problem is provide more exercise, more mental games and more attention. For protective dogs that bark at even innocuous trespassers (like that squirrel crossing the garden), teach the enough command after the alert bark.

**Jumping Up** Ack! Some dogs are chronic jumping beans. It seems that whatever you do, you just can't keep them down. There are many tricks to tackling this problem, but most importantly, never encourage your pup to jump. Really, that pouncing puppy won't miraculously stop jumping at adulthood! Keep greetings low key and squat to pup's level when saying hi. Ask all your guests to do this, too. If pup continues to jump up, simply ignore it until the jumping stops, then lavish your now-calm pup with affection. Attention, even negative, reinforces this behavior.