



THE DOGGY DIGEST

TRAINING TIPS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MUTTS WITH MANNERS

10 Toys Every Puppy Should Have At His Disposal

A puppy is very similar to having a one and a half-year-old toddler in your house who just learned how to walk and is exploring his environment with his mouth. Dogs don't have hands, so they use their mouths and teeth to explore their environments. Chewing is important for dogs to keep their jaws and teeth strong and in good working order. Chewing also relieves stress, provides an overall sense of well-being and joy, and most importantly reduces boredom. Dogs expend mental energy when they chew, so investing in toys that your puppy will love will not only save your furniture but also wear him out a little bit. Allowing bad chew habits to set in as puppies can last a lifetime, and can cause you not just stress, but also thousands of dollars. When selecting toys for your puppy keep a few things in mind:

Trade cute for functional and practical by selecting toys for your puppy, not you. There will be plenty of time for cute toys. Right now we are on a mission indestructible. We want to choose toys that will stand up to your puppy's strong jaws and sharp teeth, and items that will make him feel good while he is chewing them. If he feels good, he is more likely to choose that item again. Keep confusion out of the training process. Select toys that do not resemble items in your home you do not want your puppy to chew on. For example, a plush squeaky giraffe probably looks like a stuffed animal in your Childs room. It also could be similar to a throw pillow on your couch. A rope toy may entertain your puppy, but also could be easily confused with the tassels on the corners of your throw rugs.

A quick list of items not to ever put in your puppy's toy box include old sneakers (even if he already destroyed them), children's stuffed animals, water bottles, house slippers, and rawhides. These items have ingestible parts, cause confusion, or can bind up your puppy's GI tract.

What can your puppy have? Below are ten toys he should always have at his disposal. It is best, to begin with, the recommended 15-20 toys and add one new one each month. This will continue to enrich the rotation of toys, keep them new for your puppy, and help them last longer.

1. Rubber Kong toys-The Classic Kong and the Kong Stuff-a-ball are the best. For the best of the chewers, buy black. The black Kongs are the most durable. They can be purchased at Pet Smart or Amazon.
2. Elk Antlers by Texas wild chews at www.texaswildchews.com. On the website, you can determine which size is best for your dog. If your puppy is a large breed, go ahead and buy big, he will grow into it. If you get a smaller one, he will grow out of it and it will no longer be a safe chew item.
3. NylaBones make great chew toys. Buy size appropriate. Most puppies enjoy the NylaBone Wishbone.
4. Star Mark Everlast Treat Toy is the toy that continues to give. Use this special toy for special times when you don't want to be bothered, such as watching a movie or cooking.
5. Puzzle Feeders are a great way to occupy your puppy's brain and mouth. After expending mental energy figuring out how to get to the treats, and physical energy chewing on the toy, your puppy will be ready for a nap. Do not make these too hard in the beginning. Your puppy needs to win to stay engaged. As he gets better and faster, you can go up a level in the game, or start giving him a harder brain game. Search 'puzzle feeder' or 'brain games for dogs' on Amazon, or check out what they have at BoneVoyage Pet Resort or Pet Smart.
6. Mammoth Tirebiter's are perfectly safe chew items to give your puppy. He will have a great time carrying it around and chewing on it.
7. The Chilly Bone Dog Chew Bone by MultiPet is a canvas-covered toy with a non-toxic, freezable gel inside.
8. Stuffed Femur Bones are great for your puppy's insatiable appetite for destruction. Go raw for extra safety and refreeze in-between chew sessions to kill bacteria. Supervise to make sure your puppy doesn't break off any sharp pieces.
9. Cow hooves will occupy your puppy's jaws temporarily.
10. Bully Sticks are even more temporary than the cow hooves but still provide a long-lasting treat.

Remember to try to enjoy your puppy. This is a very temporary phase, and you will soon be wondering where your puppy went, so take lots of pictures.

Until next time, keep it pawsitive!