Inappropriate Chewing

Congratulations on adopting your new family member!

For many dogs, chewing, ripping and tearing up is playful, fun (for them!) behavior. It’s a common and normal part of learning how to be a family pet. To help curb the playful destruction it is important to provide:

- Plenty of exercise: A tired pup is less likely to start chewing out of boredom. Try to supply enough exercise so that your pup is tired during the evening times, when your family is most likely trying to relax and unwind from the day. Easy ways to exercise your pup include brisk walks, playing fetch, and even doggy play sessions if your pup is appropriately vaccinated. Remember that running around in the back yard by themselves is often not mentally or physically stimulating enough to wear out most dogs.

- Play and training exercises: The mental stimulation that training provides can help with the adjustment period of coming into a new home and also helps wear out a pup! It’s never too early to start teaching basic obedience skills like sit, stay and coming reliably when called. Add in play training like fetch, drop it and tag games to have a productive play session!

- Interesting and long lasting chews: Dogs have a natural need and desire to chew. Provide safe and interesting toys to your pup so they have appropriate objects to fulfill this need with. Filled Kong toys, Himalayan chews, bully sticks, Benebones and Nyla bones are a few suggestions to keep your pup satisfied!

- Dog-proofing: Keep things that are not for your pup out of your pups reach as much as possible. When you are not home, confine your pup in a safe space like their crate, an exercise pen or a ‘boring’ room.

- Supervision: If you see your dog start to chew on the wrong thing, calmly take that item away and exchange it for something they are allowed to chew on. If you see your dog investigating, looking around for something to chew on, immediately offer an appropriate chew before they get a chance to grab something they aren’t supposed to have. Remember, to your pup everything looks like something to chew so be patient as they learn what is acceptable and what isn’t!

If you are having issues curbing your pup’s inappropriate chewing, please contact our trainer at JGibson@adltexas.org for more tips and information!

*Special thanks to the center for shelter dogs for this resource.*