

## Paws for a Minute and Train Your Dog

**I**s your dog gnawing on your last nerve and your favorite sofa? Some of our furry family members help us redecorate our homes in ways that would make Martha Stewart's hair curl. Instead of Feng Shui with Fido you find yourself living la vida loca with your Labrador. A common bone of contention for many puppy parents is to come home after a long day of work only to find their canine has become a contractor.

Paws for a minute and think about this...

All dogs need to chew. Chewing is a function, not a behavior. What a dog chews on can become a behavior over time. Now that you know this, the million dollar question becomes: how are you supposed to survive this doggy demolition?

**Chew on this:** You do not have to catch your dog in the act of chewing on a chair. Simply call your dog with a pleasant voice, put him on a leash and guide him to what he has chewed. Put his nose near the item so that he can smell his saliva on what he has chewed, and say 'No!' using a stern voice, several times. Next, guide him over to his chew bone and in a very happy voice say 'O.K.' while giving him his chew bone and encouraging him to chew. Remove the leash and the reprimand is over.

### **Bonafide Facts about Chewing**

- Teach your pup to chew on that five dollar bone you just bought him.
- Puppy proof your house and make sure your pup has chew bones, such as bully sticks, pigs ears, rawhide and hooves. Check with your vet first because some pups have a problem digesting rawhide.
- Throw away rawhide and other

chew bones as they get too small in size, you do not want your dog to choke.

**People training:** Your new pooch should not be loose in your house when you are not home. Until your dog is trained and trustworthy, he should be gated with chew bones during the times you cannot focus on him. You wouldn't allow a human baby to crawl around the floor unattended!

In order to integrate your dog into your home, you need to provide the pup with his special area. Using a baby gate to create a space helps you do that. Gates come in different varieties and are sold in most pet stores. My favorite is the old-fashioned pressure gate with a wooden framed wire mesh front that fits most doorways.

Choose an area in your house, such as the kitchen or hallway, and put all of your pooch's toys and chew bones in that area along with a dog bed or dog crate (remove the door of the crate first). And please, don't forget the water!

### *To get your pup in the gated area:*

1. Put him on a leash and say, 'Let's go,' in a happy voice while guiding him into the gated space.
2. Guide your dog to sit. Lift up on the leash and repeat the word 'Sit' while raising the leash up and down gently, until he sits.
3. Say 'Wait,' and step backward, out of the puppy area while putting up the gate.

### *To get him out of the gated area:*

1. Approach, lean over the gate and put on the leash. Then guide your dog to sit and wait while slowly removing the gate.



above: country singer, LeAnn Rimes with Raven; left (on book cover): Inger Martens with Kevin Costner's dog, Wyatt



2. If your pup bolts through the doorway after the gate is removed, guide him back into his area and give him three quick tugs of

the leash. Simultaneously say 'No! No! No!' in a firm voice. Then repeat the process of 'Sit' and 'Wait' using a nice voice until he does.

3. To finish, get eye contact and say 'O.K.' Guide him through the doorway directly outside to go potty and then he can have free time with you.

Gating your pup in his own special space will teach him to wait and relax while you are out or doing other things. He'll learn to chew his bone as a hobby rather than your chair or shoes.

Many first time dog owners are doggedly challenged experiencing stubbornness, erratic behavior, and inexplicable aggression. People often complain that their pup is purposely chewing things to get back at them for going to work or to the movies. If you fall into this category you may not be meeting your dog's needs—for example, giving your dog enough exercise, proper chew bones or boundaries.

For more bones to chew or tails to wag, pick up my new book, *Paws for a Minute—People Training for Dog Owners*, and unleash the star in your dog!

For more tips on training your dog, log onto [www.animalfair.com](http://www.animalfair.com).