

My dog is eating my shoe. What should I do?

By Linda Michaels

He's not a bad dog for eating your shoe. From your dog's perspective it's quite the natural thing to do. Not only is your shoe possibly expensive leather but it also smells like you, and so is extra enticing.

Here are some tips to decrease inappropriate chewing...

Use Management Tools: Keep the shoes you want to keep, away from your dog. We know he is attracted to them, so the easiest thing to do is to remove the source of the problem if and until we can get some actual training in place.

Provide Chewy Alternatives: Find out what your dog likes to chew, such as a Durable Nylabone(tm), a bleached bone, pressed rawhide, bully stick, a rope toy, a food toy (Busy Buddy(tm) or Kong(tm)) and trade him the shoe for the chewy that belongs to him. Tell him "Good" when he takes his own toy and show him that you too are very happy about the choice he is now making to chew his own stuff. Tendons and chicken or duck strips are great chew treats but should be supervised. We want chewies that are either 100% edible or 100% indestructible. Finding safe chew toys is not always easy.

Anticipate Your Dog's Chewing Needs: When you see your dog casting about looking for something to do, he may need to chew. Have a toy box just for him and go help him pick something out to play with or chew. You may want to remember this motto, "If I don't give my dog something to do, he will find something to do", - and he will!

Exercise Your Dog: Chewing is not only good for your dog's mouth because it stimulates circulation in the gums, chewing also relieves stress. Be sure to provide enough exercise so he stays healthy, happy and experiences a minimum of stress. Please check with your veterinarian for appropriate exercise for your dog's needs.

Taste Aversion: If you have items you just can't remove, you may want to try using a taste aversion product- we recommend Bitter Apple(tm). Be sure to test it on the item first.

Best Suggestion: Sign your pup up for a Positive Reinforcement Training class and learn tips on how to address every problem your dog-friendly dog may have!