

<http://www.fiu.edu/~milesk/training.htm>

<snip>

Bite Inhibition Training

This was somewhat mentioned above in training a canid not to be food aggressive. This can be taught not only with food, however. When the animal has something in his mouth, reach in and take it away. Then praise the animal when he lets you do it and return the item to the animal. Continue doing this throughout the life of the animal.

When the animal is very small or is teething, he might also decide to chew on the pants, shoes, etc. that you are wearing. Do NOT let him. Remove the object from his mouth and tell him no. This will not work by itself, but it begins teaching the animal "NO". When the pup repeats the chewing act, , wrap your arm over and around pup; take your finger and insert it into the pup's mouth from the rear side, with your finger pointing toward the back of his throat--your arm is coming from around and behind the pup's head and your finger/hand is going into the back side of the mouth. **With your finger down the back of his throat, the pup's gag reflex will be triggered. Make sure the animal does not see that it is your finger causing the gag reflex you will be triggering. The theory here is that every time the animal bites something he isn't supposed to, he will (for some reason he can't figure out) begin gagging.** After repeatedly doing this every time he attempts to chew what he isn't supposed to, the animal will then begin to associate biting "no-no" items with gagging; therefore, the animal thinks, "If I bite what I am not supposed to, I gag! No fun there!"

With a larger canine, a different approach is necessary. When the canine mouths you, insert your thumb into the bottom of his mouth with your thumb pressing down on the soft part of the mouth under the tongue. At the same time, your fingers should be curled under the canine's chin, applying slight pressure to the chin. In other words, your thumb and fingers should be pressing toward each other, with the canine's chin between your thumb and fingers. While doing this, follow up on the verbal command of "No Bite!" or "Off" or some such command that you will use throughout the life of your animal. Most canines will react by pushing at your thumb with his tongue and trying to pull his lower jaw out of your grip. After a few times of doing this, the canine will eventually realize that mouthing people results in this reprimand, and the animal will then learn to keep its mouth off of people. This is a painless and highly successful way of teaching bite inhibition to older canines who haven't been taught it as pups. It is also a way of reinforcing bite inhibition to pups who have been trained, should such training need to be reinforced.