

Teething & Training

How Does It Affect Your Puppy & It's Ability To Learn

When a puppy is teething, its' mouth is sore, sometimes the gums are swollen, and it can't concentrate on anything except its sore mouth. This is why a puppy chews on everything in sight. During the time that the piranha baby teeth are starting to fall out as the new ones are pushing through, it is not a good idea to do any major training of any kind as the puppy will not be able to understand what you want because it is focused on its sore mouth.

What training you may have done prior to the baby teeth falling out and the new permanent teeth coming in, the puppy will suddenly not know what you want and will likely not do what you ask him/her to do.

It will take until the pup is approximately 8 months of age before the permanent teeth are 'set' into the jaw properly. During this time, it is not a wise idea to play tug of war with your puppy as you take the chance of either loosening the new teeth or having them set into the jaw crooked, if at all. Instead, take the puppy for walks on a leash instead of formal training per say.

Anything you try to teach the puppy during this critical teething stage, the puppy will always relate to pain therefore will be unwilling to want to comply with your expectations. The same applies to forcing your puppy to do what it has already been taught and has suddenly forgotten how to do.

Remember, the puppy won't understand completely what is going on, and doesn't understand why it has a sore mouth all the time. Think of a human baby and how much teething affects them. It drools, constantly has fingers or other things in its mouth and is cranky and sometimes has diarrhea. It can be the same for your puppy. It may even seem that your puppy doesn't seem to hear you when you call him/her during this time and it is likely due to only being able to think about its sore painful mouth.

A good thing to do to help your puppy through this stage is to freeze a carrot and give it to the pup to chew on – it will freeze the gums and lessen the pain somewhat but will need supervision while chewing on it. You can take some wet hand towels and freeze them too and give to the pup to chew and suck on. This helps a little. A lot of patience is necessary and things will return to normal for the puppy.

A lot of people will complain that the puppy all of a sudden won't be cooperative and doesn't comply with obedience commands during the teething stages. Another thing is that people make the mistake of thinking it has to force the puppy into doing what's been asked of it and this is the biggest mistake you can make. Some puppies may seem to all of a sudden develop a behavior problem during the teething stages. Change what you are doing with the puppy and don't put so many demands on the puppy to comply with your requests and the puppy will very likely come back around once teething is over. The puppy can't concentrate on anything when it is in pain.

Start your training as soon as you get your puppy and when the baby teeth start to fall out, stop training until the permanent teeth are in.