



Stealing Stuff

Stealing items can be a sign of boredom, stress, lack of appropriate chewing items, or lack of supervision.

Puppy Proof Your Home

Safely keep all inappropriate items that your dog could possibly get into out of reach: put waste baskets up high where he can't get at them, keep counters clear of food if he counter-surfs, and keep shoes, laundry and other items in cupboards.



If your dog engages with items that are impossible to put away, like for example chewing on table legs, make sure your dog has a preferred substitute, like a bone to chew instead.

Daily Stimulation

Make sure that your dog (or puppy) has enough mental and physical stimulation on a daily basis, including play-time with you, play-time with other dogs, sniffing time during 90% of each walk, and of course food puzzles instead of feeding in the bowl.

Does your dog have an adequate number and variety of appropriate chewing items? Encourage your dog to use them by making them interesting. You can stuff food-dispensing toys with great smelling food. Your interest will pique his interest! Tug-toys are great entertainment for both dog and owner, either by playing tug or by playing keep-away, although those games are NOT a suitable for children.

Always supervise your dog's chewing activities and regularly check all toys for damage. Throw them out before they become unsafe.

Supervision

When you are unable to supervise your dog, crate or otherwise contain your dog until you have time to supervise him. Do not, however, use the crate as a "baby-sitter" – management does not excuse you from your responsibility to provide your dog with adequate and appropriate mental and physical stimulation on a daily basis!

Trade for Treats and No Corrections

However frustrated you may feel, do not react with corrections ("No!" or worse) when your dog takes something. You may frighten your dog, or you may simply teach him to take items only when you are not looking, and then hide with them, and you won't know he has it. Instead, calmly trade for treats. That will teach him to bring the item to you, rather than hide with it and destroy it! Then, of course, once you get it back make sure to store it out of his reach. Corrections drive anxiety and increase stress. "Corrections" includes anything from shouting "No!" to more severe corrections.

Reduce Stress

Alleviate stressors from your dog's life as much as possible. Did something recently change in your dog's life? Did a new neighbour move in next door? Has an important individual in your dog's life disappeared? Small dogs may be especially sensitive to stressors such as grooming and handling, being picked up, being walked in a - to the dog - stressful environment, etc.

