

How to Pick the Perfect Chew Toy for Your Puppy

Purchasing a chew toy can be overwhelming, especially if it's your first time buying one for your pup. Here's a guide to help you choose the best toy for your furry friend.

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Puppies between 12 and 24 weeks chew instinctively as part of their development process, helping them explore their environment, strengthen jaw muscles, clean teeth, and find relief during teething
- When selecting chew toys, prioritize safety and durability. Choose nontoxic materials like natural fibers or grade A rubber and ensure size appropriateness for your puppy's breed
- Different types of chew toys serve various purposes — rubber toys for aggressive chewers, rope toys for cleaning teeth, puzzle toys for mental stimulation and plushies for comfort
- Regularly inspect and clean toys to prevent bacteria buildup, replace worn-out items immediately and always supervise playtime to ensure proper toy usage and safety
- To maximize your puppy's interest in toys, actively engage in playtime with them. Dogs are more likely to value toys associated with interactive play sessions with their owners

If you've recently adopted a puppy, you may notice that part of their instinct is to explore your home — and possibly chew on a shoe (or two). But don't be so quick to scold them when this happens. It's a trait they can't help, especially during their adolescent years.

Why Puppies Need to Chew

There are several reasons why puppies love to chew on things they find around your home. Chewing promotes their overall well-being; it allows them to explore their environment, strengthens their jaw muscles and keeps their teeth clean. Chewing also provides stimulation that's needed for their physical and mental development.

Just like human babies, puppies also have a teething phase. It usually peaks between 12 to 24 weeks. During this time, your puppy's baby teeth are falling out and being replaced by permanent teeth. The process can cause discomfort and pain, as their gums are particularly sore. This is why puppies use chewing to find relief.

But while chewing is perfectly great for your pup, the same cannot be said for the things in your home. To prevent your pup from sinking their teeth into your belongings, it's best to provide them with appropriate teething and chewing toys.

Tips When Choosing Chew Toys for Your Pup

Pet parents sometimes feel overwhelmed when choosing a chew toy for their pup. There are various options available today in different sizes, designs and materials. However, a toy that works for one pup may not be appropriate for another; different dogs require different toys.

There are also chew toys that look adorable but could pose hazards, such as having loose parts that can become choking hazards or are tainted with chemicals that risk your pet's health. So, before you buy a chew toy, make sure to keep these guidelines in mind:¹

- **Safety and durability are two primary characteristics to look for** — Choose toys that match your pup's chewing habits, age and size.
- **Choose toys made from nontoxic materials like natural fibers or grade A natural rubber** — Check the label to ensure they don't contain toxic chemicals like phthalates or bisphenol A.
- **Silicone and rubber chew toys are great for dogs that are tough chewers**, as these can withstand your dog's strong jaw while being safe for chewing.
- **Consider your dog's breed when choosing toys** — Large breeds may choke from too-small chew toys, while large, tough chew toys may end up damaging a small breed pup's developing teeth.
- **Inspect and clean your pet's chew toys regularly** to prevent bacteria buildup.
- **Throw away and replace toys** that have signs of wear and tear.
- **Always supervise your pet's playtime** to ensure they are using the chew toys properly.

Different Types of Chew Toys

Below are some examples of safe chew toys you can buy for your pup:

- **Rubber toys** — This is recommended for aggressive chewers as they are extremely durable. Some rubber chew toys even function as puzzle toys that can hold treats inside, providing extra entertainment for pups. Softer rubber teething toys can be given to puppies around 4 to 24 weeks old.
- **Rope toys** — If your dog loves to play, this toy is recommended for tug-of-war games. The fibers help clean your pet's gums and teeth, reducing the buildup of plaque. Rope toys are recommended for older, large breed puppies or young adult dogs that already have their permanent teeth.
- **Puzzle toys** — These are designed to mentally stimulate energetic pups. If your pup is often bored, try letting them use this chew toy. Puzzle toys can be enhanced by adding treats inside, which will help your pup stay focused and determined.
- **Plushies** — These soft toys provide your pup with comfort and companionship, especially during stressful times. Young puppies, puppies with anxiety and small breeds will benefit from these toys.

Don't Just Buy a Toy — Play with Your Dog as Well

If you want your pup to truly appreciate the toys you purchase for them, here's one suggestion — use it to play with them. Many dogs usually lose their interest in toys after a while; if you use the toy to engage them in a game, chances are they'll pay more attention to it. Dogs will definitely show more interest in toys that they associate with play time.

In addition, try to stay in the moment whenever you engage in a play or exercise session with your dog. Give your full focus to them and show them your enthusiasm. Remember, you are the center of their universe, and they will cherish any toy they associate with spending time with you.

Sources and References

¹ [Petmate, October 15, 2024](#)
