

BONUS GUIDE

Land Shark Rescue

A Step-by-Step Plan to Stop Puppy Biting (Without Losing Your Mind)



A companion to **Is This Normal? The Puppy Blues Survival Plan**

NIBBLE & NAP

INTRODUCTION

Your Hands Will Heal

Your forearms look like you lost a fight with a rosebush. Your favorite sweater has holes in the sleeves. And every evening, right around dinner time, your sweet puppy turns into a tiny, furry piranha.

If you're reading this, you've probably tried the basics already. You've offered toys, said "ouch", walked away. Some days it works. Some days it feels like nothing works.

This guide picks up where Chapter 3 of the Survival Plan left off. That chapter gave you the foundations. This one gives you the details: why the biting happens at certain moments, a daily routine that prevents most of it, what to do in each tricky situation, how to keep kids and guests safe, and how to tell normal play from something that needs a professional.

● How to use this guide

You don't need to read it all tonight. Here's a quick way in:

- **Short on time?** Jump to the 7-day biting reset plan in Chapter 2 and start tomorrow.
- **One situation drives you crazy?** Go straight to the troubleshooting table in Chapter 3.
- **Kids at home?** Read Chapter 4 together as a family.
- **Something feels off?** Read Chapter 5 first.

Remember: a biting puppy is not a bad puppy, and you are not a bad owner. You're both learning, and learning takes repetition.

CHAPTER 1

Understanding Your Land Shark

Biting makes much more sense once you can read *why* it's happening right now. A tired bite, an excited bite and a teething bite look similar on your skin. But each one needs a different answer.



Is this normal?

Yes. Mouthing, nipping and grabbing at hands, feet and clothes is typical puppy behavior, and it often peaks somewhere between about 8 weeks and 5 months. Many puppies seem to bite *more* for a while before it improves. If biting comes with a stiff body, freezing, a hard stare or growling over food or toys, see Chapter 5 and talk to your vet and a qualified trainer.

● Why puppies need to bite

Your puppy didn't come with hands. The mouth is how they grab, carry, explore, play and ask for attention.

With their littermates, they spent their first weeks wrestling and nipping all day. When a bite was too hard, the other puppy yelped and walked away, and the fun stopped. That's how puppies start learning **bite inhibition**: controlling how hard they use their mouth.

Bite inhibition is the real goal of this guide. A puppy who learns that human skin is fragile grows into a dog with a soft mouth, which matters a lot if they ever get scared or hurt as an adult. So the aim is not "never use your mouth again" overnight. It's "softer, then less, then not on people".

● Biting through the ages

Every puppy is different, but biting often follows a rough pattern:

Age	What it often looks like	Your focus
8-10 weeks	Lots of light mouthing, wild bursts when tired	Naps, toys, calm handling
10-16 weeks	Harder, faster play bites, ankle chasing	Routine, trades, redirection
4-6 months	Teething, chewing, mouthy when bored	Cold chews, enrichment, consistency
6+ months	Mouthiness when overexcited or frustrated	Calm games, brain work, self-control

● Read the bite: four types

Before you react, take two seconds to ask: *what kind of bite is this?*

- **The tired bite.** Fast, frantic, hard, often after a long awake stretch. Your puppy can't "hear" you. They need sleep, not training.
- **The excited bite.** Comes during play, greetings or zoomies. Bouncy body, play bows, maybe barking. They need a calmer game and a lower energy level.
- **The teething bite.** Slower, chewy, gnawing on hands, furniture or your shoelaces. Often more drool. They need something cold or chewy to work on.
- **The attention bite.** Happens when you're busy: on the phone, cooking, watching TV. A nip at your pants that says "hey, look at me". They need attention for calm behavior instead.

There's also a fifth type that's different: the **"leave me alone" bite**. A stiff body, a freeze, a growl, then a snap. That's communication, not play. Chapter 5 explains what to do.

● The bite diary

For three days, jot down each biting burst in your phone notes. Keep it short:

- **When:** time of day
- **Before:** what happened just before (woke up, long play, guests, you sat down)
- **Type:** tired, excited, teething or attention

Biting often clusters at the same times, usually after long awake periods. Once you see the pattern, you can plan around it.

What to avoid

- ✗ **Treating every bite the same way.** A tired puppy needs a nap, not another lesson.
- ✗ **Taking it personally.** Your puppy isn't being mean or "dominant". They're being a puppy.
- ✗ **Expecting zero biting right away.** Softer bites are real progress.
- ✗ **Ignoring the stiff, frozen bite.** That one needs a different plan (Chapter 5).

✓ Your understanding checklist

- ☐ I know the four play-bite types and the warning bite
- ☐ Three-day bite diary started
- ☐ Biting "rush hours" spotted
- ☐ Whole family knows the goal: softer, then less

CHAPTER 2

The Daily Anti-Biting Routine

Most of the work against biting happens *before* the teeth come out. A puppy who sleeps enough, chews enough and has things to do bites far less. This chapter turns that into a simple daily routine and a 7-day reset plan.



Is this normal?

Yes, if your puppy bites less on calm days and much more on busy days. Routine changes, visitors, travel and missed naps often bring biting back for a while. If your puppy seems unusually irritable, sensitive when touched, or stops eating, check with your vet: discomfort can make any puppy bitier.

● Protect the naps

The Survival Plan said it in Chapter 2, and it's worth repeating once: most biting storms are tiredness storms.

- **Count awake time, not play time.** For young puppies, short awake periods followed by long naps are normal. When the awake stretch runs long, biting usually follows.
- **Set phone alarms** for nap times on busy days. It's easy to lose track.
- **Use a calm wind-down** before naps: potty, a lick mat or chew in the crate, lights dimmed.

● Feed the brain, not just the belly

A bored puppy finds things to do, and your ankles are right there. Enrichment gives the mouth and the brain a job.

- **Mealtime puzzles.** Serve part of each meal in a snuffle mat, a puzzle toy or a stuffed rubber toy instead of a bowl.
- **Scatter feeding.** Toss a handful of kibble on the grass or a towel and let your puppy sniff it out.
- **Lick mats.** Licking is calming. Spread a little of your puppy's wet food on a mat. Ask your vet which foods are safe.
- **Sniff walks.** Short outings where sniffing is the whole point tire the brain more than running.

● Set up chew stations

A chew station is a small basket of approved chews in every room where your puppy spends time. The idea is simple: a better option is always within arm's reach.

- 1 **Pick three or four spots:** living room, kitchen, bedroom, by the front door.
- 2 **Fill each with 2-3 chews** of different textures: soft rubber, rope, a tug toy, a vet-approved edible chew.
- 3 **Keep a frozen option** in the freezer: a damp washcloth or a stuffed rubber toy.
- 4 **Rotate every few days** so the toys stay interesting.

● Toy-in-hand and trade games

Hands are only boring if something else is more fun. Two tools make that happen.

Toy-in-hand. Whenever you play, sit with the puppy or walk through the house during rush hour, keep a long tug toy or a soft rope in your hand. Long toys keep teeth far from fingers. Wiggle it on the floor, let your puppy catch it, and praise.

The trade game. This teaches your puppy that letting go pays off.

- 1 While your puppy holds a toy, show a treat near their nose.
- 2 The moment they let go, say "yes!" and give the treat.
- 3 Give the toy back and keep playing.
- 4 Repeat a few times per session. Add a cue like "trade" once it's smooth.

Trading is your rescue tool when your puppy grabs a sleeve, a sock or the leash. A puppy who loves trading lets go much faster.

● Your 7-day biting reset plan

Use this when biting feels out of control. It won't fix everything in a week, but it resets the routine so the rest of this guide can work.

Day	Main focus	Do this	Watch for
1	Sleep	Set nap alarms, wind-down before each nap	Fewer frantic bursts
2	Chew stations	Baskets in every room, frozen chew ready	Puppy picks toys more often
3	Toy-in-hand	Long toy in hand during every play and rush hour	Teeth landing on toys, not skin
4	Trade game	Three short trade sessions	Faster letting go
5	Enrichment	One meal in a puzzle, one sniff walk	Calmer evenings
6	Rush hour plan	Plan for your worst time of day (see Chapter 3)	Shorter, softer bursts
7	Family review	Same words and reactions for everyone	Fewer "surprise" bites

Keep each step going as you add the next one.

What to avoid

- ✗ **Trying to tire the puppy out with more play.** It usually creates a wilder, more overtired puppy.
- ✗ **Keeping all the toys in one big pile.** Rotation keeps them exciting.
- ✗ **Grabbing things out of your puppy's mouth.** It teaches them to run or clamp harder. Trade instead.
- ✗ **Dropping the routine when things improve.** The routine is *why* things improved.

 Your daily routine checklist

- ☐ Nap alarms set on the phone
- ☐ Chew station in every room the puppy uses
- ☐ Frozen chew ready in the freezer
- ☐ At least one meal a day from a puzzle or scatter
- ☐ Long tug toy in hand during play
- ☐ Trade game practiced daily
- ☐ 7-day reset plan printed or saved

CHAPTER 3

Biting by Situation

Some puppies mainly bite hands. Others go for ankles, the leash or the kids' pajamas. The routine in Chapter 2 lowers biting overall. This chapter gives you a specific plan for each hot spot.



Is this normal?

Yes, if biting shows up mostly in a few predictable situations. That's actually good news, because predictable means plannable. If your puppy bites only when touched in one specific spot, or yelps when picked up, ask your vet to check for pain before you start training.

● Quick troubleshooting table

Find your situation, try the quick fix, then read the section below for the full plan.

If your puppy...	Try first	Plan ahead
Attacks ankles as you walk	Freeze, toy on the floor	Toss treats ahead as you move
Hangs on sleeves or clothes	Freeze, trade for a toy	Wear old, plain clothes for a while
Bites the leash	Stop walking, trade	Bring a tug toy on walks
Bites when petted	Stop petting, pause	Short, slow strokes, chew in mouth
Goes wild in the evening	Potty, chew, crate nap	Plan the "witching hour"
Bites when picked up	Lift less, warn first	"Up" cue with treats
Bites at collar or harness	Pause, treat at the neck	Practice gear in tiny steps
Bites the cat or older dog	Calmly separate	Gates, leashes, managed meetings

● When you're moving: ankles, sleeves and the leash

Moving things trigger the chase. To a puppy, your swinging pant leg looks exactly like a toy running away.

Ankle biting while you walk

- **Freeze for a second.** Movement keeps the game going. Stillness ends it.
- **Drop a toy to the floor** and wiggle it. Praise when teeth go on the toy.
- **Toss treats ahead of you** as you walk through the house. Your puppy's nose goes down and forward, away from your feet.

Sleeves, pants and clothes

- **Go still and quiet.** Tugging back turns it into the best tug game ever.
- **Offer a trade.** A treat or a tug toy near the nose. When they let go, "yes!" and play with the toy instead.
- **Wear plain, close-fitting clothes for a while.** Flappy sleeves, dangling cords and bathrobes are irresistible.

Leash biting

- **Stop walking** the moment the leash goes in the mouth. Walking forward makes it a tug.
- **Trade** for a treat or a small tug toy you carry on walks.
- **Lower the energy.** Leash biting often comes from excitement or frustration. A few minutes of sniffing helps.
- **Practice at home:** leash on, a few steps, treats, leash off. Make the leash boring before it goes outside.

● When you're touching: petting, picking up and gear

Some puppies find hands overwhelming and use their mouth to say "that's enough". Gentle handling basics are in Chapter 10 of the Survival Plan. Here's how to handle the mouthy moments.

Biting during petting

- **Pet slowly, in short strokes,** on the chest or side rather than the top of the head.
- **Do the "pet test":** stroke for three seconds, then stop. If your puppy leans in or nudges you, continue. If they move away or mouth your hand, they've said no thanks.
- **Give the mouth a job.** Pet while your puppy chews a toy or licks a mat.

Biting when picked up

- **Pick up less.** Many puppies dislike being lifted. Let them walk where it's safe.
- **Warn first.** Say a cue like "up", wait a second, then lift with one hand under the chest and one under the rear. Treat once you're holding them.
- **Keep it short** and put them down calmly while they're still relaxed.

Biting at the collar or harness

- 1 **Show the harness, treat.** Repeat until your puppy looks happy to see it.
- 2 **Touch it to the body, treat.** Then take it away.
- 3 **Slip it on for one second, treat, take it off.**
- 4 **Build up slowly** over several days. If your puppy mouths, go back a step.

Reaching for the collar can also trigger nips. Practice a "collar grab game": touch the collar gently, then treat. Your puppy learns that a hand near the neck means good things.

• When energy spikes: zoomies and the witching hour

Many puppies have a daily "witching hour", often in the evening, when the house is busy and the puppy has been awake too long.

Here's a simple evening plan:

- 1 **Plan a nap right before** your usual witching hour.
- 2 **Give a brain activity** when your puppy wakes: a puzzle toy or a scatter feed.
- 3 **Short, calm play** with a long toy. Two or three minutes is enough.
- 4 **Potty break.**
- 5 **Wind-down chew** in the pen or crate while the family has dinner.

If zoomies start anyway, don't chase or try to grab your puppy. Stand still, stay calm and let them run in a safe space. When they slow down, toss a few treats on the floor, then guide them to a chew. If the zoomies end in hard biting, that's your sign the nap was overdue.

● When it's the other pets

Puppies often try to play with the cat or the older dog like they did with their littermates. Not every animal appreciates it.

- **Manage first.** Use gates and the pen so the other pet always has an escape route and a puppy-free zone.
- **Leash or drag line during meetings.** A light house line, used only when you're supervising, lets you calmly guide your puppy away without grabbing.
- **Reward calm.** When your puppy looks at the cat and then looks away, "yes!" and treat.
- **Let the older dog say no,** but step in before they need to. A short growl or turn-away is normal dog talk. Repeated snapping, a pet hiding all the time or anyone getting hurt is a sign to separate them and ask a qualified trainer for help.

What to avoid

- ✗ **Running away from a biting puppy.** Fast movement fuels the chase.
- ✗ **Tugging back on sleeves or the leash.** It makes the game more fun.
- ✗ **Grabbing the collar to stop biting.** It can make your puppy fear hands near the neck.
- ✗ **Leaving the puppy and the cat alone together.** Supervise every meeting for now.
- ✗ **Letting the evening rush happen by accident.** Plan it instead.

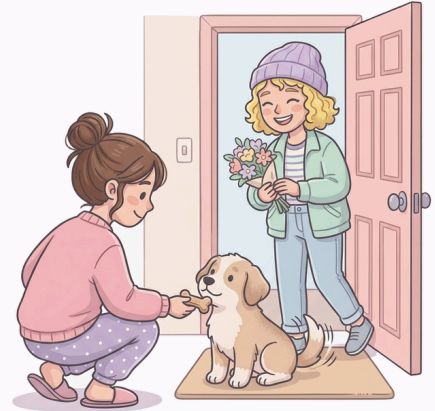
✓ Your situation checklist

- ☐ My top three biting situations identified
- ☐ Troubleshooting table saved on my phone
- ☐ Old, plain clothes set aside for puppy time
- ☐ Tug toy packed for walks
- ☐ Evening witching-hour plan in place
- ☐ Safe zones set up for other pets

CHAPTER 4

Puppies, Kids and Visitors

Children and guests are the most exciting, and most bitten, people in your puppy's life. They move fast, squeal and wave their hands. To a puppy, that's an open invitation to play.



Is this normal?

Yes, if your puppy is mouthier with kids than with adults. Children often act a lot like littermates, so puppies treat them that way. It is *not* okay for children to be bitten in a way that breaks skin or scares them. If that happens repeatedly, keep the puppy and children separated and contact a qualified reward-based trainer. Ask your vet if you need help finding one.

● Family rules for kids

Keep the rules short, clear and the same for everyone. Stick them on the fridge.

- **Puppy plays only with a grown-up nearby.**
- **There's always a toy between your hands and the puppy.**
- **No chasing, no wrestling, no tug-of-war with clothes.**
- **When the puppy is sleeping or eating, leave them alone.**
- **If the puppy bites, be a tree.**
- **The pen and crate are the puppy's "bedroom". No kids inside.**

● Teach kids to "be a tree"

"Be a tree" is the most useful skill your children can learn. Practice it without the puppy first, like a game.

- 1 **Stop:** feet still, like roots in the ground.
- 2 **Fold your branches:** arms crossed, hands tucked in.
- 3 **Look at your roots:** eyes on your feet, not on the puppy.
- 4 **Stay quiet:** trees don't scream or giggle.
- 5 **Wait for the grown-up** to come and help.

Practice a few times a day, with an adult playing "puppy". Praise the best tree, so it becomes automatic when the real puppy gets bitey.

● Scripts for kids

Kids remember short phrases better than long explanations. Use the same ones every time.

- **When the puppy nips:** "Teeth on skin? Be a tree!"
- **To play nicely:** "Toy goes in the puppy's mouth, not my hand."
- **When the puppy is tired:** "Bitey puppy means sleepy puppy. Time for a nap."
- **When they want to cuddle:** "Let the puppy come to you. Three pets, then stop."
- **When they're upset:** "The puppy isn't mean. He's a baby who's still learning."

For toddlers, keep it even simpler: the puppy and a toddler are only together with an adult's hands free and eyes on, or not at all. Very young children can't reliably follow rules yet, and that's normal too.

● Supervision setups

You can't watch your puppy and your kids every second. Set up your home so you don't have to.

- **Active supervision:** an adult is in the room, watching, ready to step in. This is the only time puppy and kids play together.
- **Barrier time:** the puppy is in the pen or behind a gate with a chew while kids play nearby. They can see each other, but no one gets bitten.
- **Crate or nap time:** the puppy sleeps in a quiet room, away from the action.

- **Kid-free zone:** one room or corner where the puppy can always retreat.

If you're cooking, on the phone or helping with homework, that's barrier time. No exceptions.

● Visitors and playdates

Visitors bring noise, new smells and lots of hands. Plan ahead and most biting never happens.

- **Before they arrive:** potty, a short sniff, then a chew in the pen.
- **Brief your guests:** "We're teaching him not to bite. Please keep your hands still and let him come to you."
- **Hand guests a toy,** not just treats, so they can redirect the puppy's mouth.
- **For kids' playdates,** keep the puppy in the pen or a separate room. Visiting children don't know your rules.

What to avoid

- ✗ **Leaving kids and the puppy alone together,** even for a minute.
- ✗ **Letting kids run and scream to "get the puppy used to it".** It teaches chasing.
- ✗ **Asking kids to correct the puppy.** Training is a grown-up job.
- ✗ **Forcing cuddles on a puppy who's moving away.** It can make them nip to be left alone.

✓ Your kids and visitors checklist

- ☐ Family rules on the fridge
- ☐ "Be a tree" practiced with every child
- ☐ Kid scripts agreed and used
- ☐ Pen and gates set up for barrier time
- ☐ Kid-free zone for the puppy
- ☐ Guest briefing ready for visitors

CHAPTER 5

When It's More Than Play

Most puppy biting is normal play that improves with time and routine. Sometimes, though, a bite means "I'm scared", "I'm hurting" or "that's mine". This chapter helps you tell the difference.



Is this normal?

Play biting with a loose, wiggly body is normal. Biting with a stiff body, freezing, a hard stare, growling over food or toys, or biting that seems scared or panicked is *not* typical play. If you see it, or if bites break skin repeatedly, talk to your vet first to check for pain, then contact a qualified reward-based trainer or veterinary behaviorist.

● Play bite or warning bite?

Watch the whole body, not just the mouth.

Signal	Usually play	Needs attention
Body	Loose, wiggly, bouncy	Stiff, frozen, low or rigid
Face	Soft eyes, open mouth	Hard stare, closed mouth, lips pulled back
Sounds	Playful barks, play growls	Low, steady growl, then a snap
After	Comes back for more	Moves away, hides or guards

Play growling during tug is usually normal and comes with a bouncy body. A growl with a frozen body is a different message.

● Signs that need a closer look

Talk to your vet and a qualified professional if you notice:

- **Guarding:** growling, freezing or snapping when someone comes near food, toys, chews or a favorite resting place.
- **Handling bites:** biting when touched in a specific spot, when brushed, or when picked up, especially if it's new.
- **Fear bites:** biting when cornered, when a stranger reaches over, or during vet or grooming visits.
- **Bites that break skin** again and again, even with a good routine.
- **Getting worse, not better** after several weeks of consistent work.
- **Any situation where you feel unsafe**, or worry about your children or other pets.

● Why pain comes first

A puppy with sore gums, an ear problem, a tummy ache or an injury may bite simply because it hurts. That's why the first call for a sudden change or a touch-sensitive puppy is to your vet. Ruling out health causes makes the rest of the work fair to your puppy.

● What to do while you wait for help

You can make things safer today, without punishment.

- 1 **Manage, don't test.** Avoid the situations that trigger the bite. Use gates, the pen and leashes so it can't happen.
- 2 **Don't take things away.** If your puppy guards a chew, don't reach for it. Toss a treat away from them and pick up the chew later when they've moved.
- 3 **Never punish a growl.** A growl is a warning. Punishing it can teach a puppy to skip the warning and bite.
- 4 **Keep kids away** from the triggers completely.
- 5 **Write it down:** when, where, what happened before, what happened after. It helps the professional a lot.

Chapter 17 of the Survival Plan explains how to choose the right professional. Look for reward-based, force-free methods, and ask your vet about a veterinary behaviorist for serious fear or aggression.

Remember: asking for help early is a smart move, not a failure. It's how good owners protect their puppy and their family.

What to avoid

- ✗ **Punishing growling or snapping.** It hides the warning, not the feeling.
- ✗ **"Testing" your puppy** by reaching into their bowl or grabbing their toy.
- ✗ **Waiting to see if they grow out of it** when bites are hard, frozen or getting worse.
- ✗ **Any harsh method** like holding the mouth shut, scruffing or alpha rolls. They raise fear and the risk of bites.
- ✗ **Choosing a trainer who uses pain or fear.** Your puppy deserves kinder help.

✓ Your safety checklist

- ☐ I can tell a play bite from a warning bite
- ☐ Vet visit booked if biting is new, touch-related or getting worse
- ☐ Triggers avoided and managed with gates and the pen
- ☐ No one in the family punishes growling
- ☐ Bite log ready for the professional
- ☐ Reward-based trainer or veterinary behaviorist contacted if needed

THE END

Before You Go

Puppy biting can make you feel like you're failing at the one thing you wanted most: a happy life with your dog. You're not failing. You're living through one of the toughest, most normal phases of puppyhood, and you now have a plan for it.

Pick one thing from this guide and start today. Protect the naps, set up a chew station, or run the 7-day reset. Most puppies get softer, then calmer, over the following weeks and months, especially when the whole family plays by the same rules.

When you need the bigger picture, go back to *The Puppy Blues Survival Plan*. And if potty troubles, nights or alone time are next on your list, your other bonus guides, *Potty Rescue*, *Sleep Rescue* and *Home Alone Starter*, are ready when you are.

This guide is a training and lifestyle resource for puppy owners. It is not veterinary or medical advice. Always follow your veterinarian for anything related to your dog's health. For aggression, strong fears or panic, consult a qualified professional.

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