



Biting Dogs

**By Sue Myles
Companion Dogs**

Most biting problems are easily solved. I have a special interest in dogs that bite and have created successful, gentle methods for them. Euthanasia is rarely the best solution. Behavior training, understanding your dog's unique personality, managing the environment differently and force-free obedience training are better ideas.

Choke, pinch, and shock collars are not the answer. Gentle, more effective equipment that gets fast results has replaced these outdated tools.

Harsh treatment makes biting worse. Shaking by the neck, rolling the dog over on its back, pinning the dog to the ground, jerking and hanging by a choke chain results in bitten owners and increasingly aggressive pets.

The number bites is *not* a factor in successfully solving problems. "Once a biter, always a biter" is a myth. Different dogs bite for different reasons. The first step is to understand the type of aggression problem your pet has. A dog that bites when you pull him off the couch is trained differently than one that bites when you get near his food.

Oliver

Oliver, a small mixed breed, had bitten his owner nineteen times before she asked for help. Oliver bit when he was approached when eating, he was told to get off the couch, strangers came to the door, he was pulled by the collar, and he was on a walk and saw another dog. Here is how we helped Oliver:

1. Changed the location of feeding to a quiet area. Rewarded Oliver for non-aggressive behavior at food bowl as the owner gradually moved closer. Eventually, he would sit and the bowl could be taken away and returned.
2. He wore a leash in the house to keep the owner's hands away from his mouth. He was taken off the couch with the leash and heavily rewarded for obeying. After two weeks, the leash was removed.

3. We trained him to be six feet from the door when visitors arrived. They would ignore him for a few minutes, and then talk to him. Oliver was less threatened, more relaxed and better able to greet them.
4. He was retrained with gentle collars while being heavily rewarded. And, the owner stopped dragging him out the door and shouting at him, "Now you go outside, you bad dog!"
5. When Oliver bit his owner on walks, he really wanted to fight with the other dog but was restrained by the leash. His frustration caused him to strike at the nearest object, his owner's leg. Oliver now wears a different collar, which prevents him from turning on the owner when frustrated.
6. Oliver was neutered. His problems with aggression are those that respond well to neutering.

Oliver lives safely and happily with his owner today. Oliver's owner followed the training program and was determined to help him. Your cooperation is a ***must***. I can design a helpful program, but I cannot ***do*** it for you!