

### **Appropriate Puppy Toys: with Darr Houssen**

All puppies are born with a natural instinct called "prey drive". This is your puppy's survival instinct to feed itself. Since the domesticated dog has all his food supplied, these instincts present themselves in patterns that you may not recognize. Watch your pup play with a stuffed toy. See him toss it around, pounce on it, bat it with his feet, shred it or even bury it. These actions simulate the hunt, kill and disposal of a small mammal. Natural to your pup, but difficult to live with in your home.

You must provide your puppy with a variety of articles. He will need soft articles like plush toys (eyes and noses removed) to replace those little mammals he would hunt. Allow him to have a big plush toy to simulate a litter mate. Yard sales or second hand spots have many to choose from, at low costs. Limited amounts of rawhides are great as well. Marrow bones are available from your butcher or a pet store. Once empty, stuff them with cheese or peanut butter to keep your pup busy for hours. Squeaky toys, hockey balls, tennis balls, frizbees and soccer balls are all good items.

Without this reserve of proper toys to draw from, your pup could resort to items such as pillows, socks, shoes, mats, kleenex or anything else soft and within reach as replacements. Set up a toy box for your puppy and let him see you loading it up with the goodies. Then invite him to help himself. He'll catch on, real quick.



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