



## Surviving Christmas with Puppy under Foot

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Christmas is a joyous time for many involving time with family, friends and our beloved pets. And, with many of us gaining a new furry family member in the months leading up to this time of year, we have some new challenges.

Puppies love to explore with their mouths. Not just exploring, but chewing, biting, stealing and sometimes consuming.

Read below for 5 tips to keep puppy out of trouble:

1. Management: The Christmas tree including decorations and presents need to be physically out of reach. This can be achieved by using a pen, crate or lead to keep your puppy contained (or a pen around the tree).
2. Appropriate puppy toys and chews to keep puppy interested in something else and distracted. To keep the toys interesting ensure that only 25% of your puppy's toys are accessible at one time. Each day bring out a different 25%.
3. Redirection. If puppy is chewing on something inappropriate redirect to one of the toys above or an interactive toy such as a long tug toy. For best results, move away from your puppy while playing with the toy yourself so your puppy is convinced you have something better.
4. Use treat dispensing toys such as Kongs, treat balls, slow feeders and food puzzle toys to feed your puppy's food during Christmas Day meals. If your puppy is new to these toys, choose slow feeder bowls, round treat balls with large openings or a snuffle mat. For advanced puppies, put their food in at least 3 different toys.
5. In the lead up to Christmas, teach your puppy to hang out comfortably on a mat while tethered or in a pen so you can relax with your puppy at Christmas without having them under your feet. Short daily sessions at your puppy's pace using treats as rewards for any calm behaviour is the way to go.

Christmas is often a busy, noisy time, so ensure your puppy still gets plenty of sleep (16-18 hrs up to 6 months) and has a safe space where no one disturbs them and they can choose to go to (open crate or pen or room).

Merry Christmas and enjoy the time with your loved ones (Hooman and non Hooman).