

What to Do:

If your dog is starting to be a **RESOURCE GUARDER**

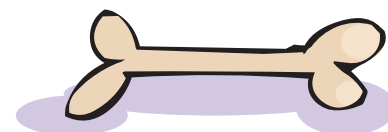


Guarding resources is a natural canine behavior that stems from pack mentality and hierarchical activity, but for dogs living in a human world, it is an undesirable and unacceptable behavior that could have terrible consequences. It is important to show your dog from a young age that allowing people to take its belongings is not a bad thing, and there is no need to guard his resources.

A dog who is guarding an object (food, water, bone, toy, etc) will freeze as a hand comes near it, growl, show the whites of his eyes (known as whale eye), snarl and possibly bite. If your dog is at the beginning stages of becoming a resource guarder, he will place itself between you and the item and freeze if you go to take the item away. If guarding food he will eat at lightening speed. You need to show your dog that good things come from hands being near its possessions. Here are some ways to teach your dog that they do not need to guard resources from you:

- Feed your dog by hand
- Throw your dog's meals into the bowl one handful at a time
- While your dog is eating dinner, reach down and throw some yummy hotdogs into the bowl
- While your dog is chewing on a highly valued resource, walk by and toss some cheese or steak at him. This will teach your dog that your approach only means more goodies! NEVER take things away from him without some sort of trade – this just teaches the dog that you WILL take things away, which will serve as motivation for the dog to guard things from you.
- Teach your dog a “drop it” and/or a “leave-it” command. This will allow you to retrieve objects from your dog without it turning into a struggle
- If your dog only guards a specific item (example: bones) take that object away until you can teach your dog not to guard it, or only give that item to your dog in a crate with the door closed to prevent your dog from feeling the need to guard

If your dog is a serious resource guarder and has bitten anyone or snapped at anyone, you should consult a behaviorist to help you deal with the issue. Only take the item away from your dog if you know he will not bite you. If your dog is a resource guarder, monitor interactions with children VERY closely.



Resource guarding can become a dangerous behavior if not handled properly, so please speak to a staff member about your specific situation.

Resource guarding:

- NEVER walk up to the dog and take her resource (bones, chewies, etc). ALWAYS approach with treats, and do not loom over the dog or make direct eye contact (as these are very challenging postures). Hand her a treat and walk away.
- If you need to take a resource from her, throw a handful of treats AWAY from her chewy. Once your dog turns to scarf up the treats, remove her chewy.
- Teach her that you are not a threat:
 1. Get comfortable on the floor.
 2. Keeping the chewy in hand, offer it to your dog to chew on. Make sure the hand that is holding the chewy remains on the ground.
 3. DO NOT MAKE EYE CONTACT.
 4. Calmly pet the dog (using long firm strokes) while the dog is chewing on the chewy.
 5. If you feel teeth on your hand, give a sharp yipe, and remove the chewy and your attention for a couple of seconds before allowing the dog to continue.
 6. If your dog starts to try to tug the chewy out of your hand, calmly say the dog's name and give her a treat. If she does not listen and continues, drop a handful of treats near the dog. When she goes to eat them, calmly remove yourself and the chewy.
 7. To end these sessions, toss a few treats on the ground while you remove the chewy.
 8. If the dog ever has something she is not supposed to have, and starts guarding it, do not try to snatch the item away. Always use treats to trade the item for.

