

TAKING TREATS GENTLY

Not all dogs are born with a “soft mouth”. Some dogs seem to be determined to get a piece of your finger along with the treats you offer. Once a person is nipped hard while giving a treat the reaction is often to offer, pull away, offer, pull away because of the fear of being nipped again. This loss of confidence by the dog owner and hesitant treat offering further fuels your dog’s grabby behavior. While it is uncomfortable to have your fingers nipped while you are training your dog to take treats gently, it is miserable to ignore training this valuable skill and have your fingers nipped for years and years.

Training for a soft mouth should be done as a completely separate training session at first. To overcome your dog’s grabby, nippy habit, feed her only very small pieces of food, so she always has to make only way to teach your dog to allow her to nip as usual. If hand away (enticing her to enthusiastically), simply hold on tighter to the small puts her mouth on your release the food. If she ignore the behavior (ignored then disappear), remain still and quiet. You can jump start this process by feeding your dog her dinner, one kibble at a time with this method. At the end of a week you should have a dog that consistently takes treats gently.



For overly rough dogs or for people with very tender fingers, place the treat onto the bowl of a spoon with the handle pointed up your wrist. Hold the treat and spoon with your thumb over the treat and your index finger under the spoon. When you present your dog with the treat, allow her to snap the treat with the spoon. Once she bites down with less pressure, slide the treat off of the spoon and towards your dog’s mouth so that she can take it without hitting the spoon. The discomfort of teeth on spoon can help your dog learn to be more gentle.

Neither of the above techniques requires a command, after all, taking treats gently should be something that is done automatically by your dog. Be patient, work consistently and you will enjoy giving your dog treats for the rest of her life.