



HORTON DOGS

PUPPY BITING GUIDE

Is it Normal for Puppies to Bite?

As a new puppy owner, there comes a moment when your puppy unexpectedly surprises you with a sudden grab and bite. In that instant, you might question if this is normal puppy behaviour or wonder if your puppy is displaying aggression.

Biting is a perfectly normal behaviour in puppies. Despite not being the most enjoyable aspect of their behaviour, it serves as a way for them to explore and understand the world around them. They use their mouths to learn textures, and understand what's chew-worthy.





Puppies will bite most when they first wake up and are full of energy, when they are over stimulated, frustrated or overtired.

With that in mind it's important to be one step ahead, when they wake, put a puppy lead on and go give them a toilet break followed by some training. Channel the energy of that little land shark into something productive!

It's crucial to realise that your puppy is still learning to navigate the human world and doesn't comprehend the expectations in a household.

Therefore, it's important to be patient and understanding as they go through this learning process.

What to do if your puppy bites:

It is important to teach your puppy that biting is not acceptable.

If they put teeth on skin make a "uhuh" noise and walk away. After a few moments get down and invite the puppy in for a play with a toy. If they do it again, repeat. If you can't walk away because they're hanging off you like a land shark, you'll need them to be on a house lead whenever they are out of their crate. Hold the lead to guide your puppy away from you and give them something more appropriate to chew such as a toy or smoked bone.

- If they persist, guide them to their enclosed space for settling.
- In their enclosed space, offer a chew to provide a calming alternative. This allows them to learn self-regulation and find a healthy chewing outlet.

Encourage Naps

The top solution is promoting naps. If all needs have been met, your puppy likely feels frustrated, overwhelmed, and exhausted. Navigating the world is tiring, and frequent napping is essential for their well-being.



Why Do Puppies Bite?

Teething:

Puppies can often be in pain and discomfort due to teething, you may see the odd tooth on the floor or some specs of blood on their toys as their adult teeth start to push through. This teething phase can last for six to eight months or so. They might prefer softer textures or something cold to soothe the pain like a frozen rope toy. If you suspect they may be teething then try not to play tug too roughly as this may be uncomfortable for them during this time.



Lack of Sleep:

Puppies need 17-20 hours of sleep daily — surprising, right? Sometimes, the solution to puppy challenges lies in more rest and less excitement. While you're thrilled your pup is home and eager to spend time with them, remember that sleep and rest is crucial for their growth and development.

Think about a toddler missing their nap; the results are often not pleasant. Similarly, puppies require sufficient rest to avoid frustration and outbursts.



To ensure your pup gets the sleep they need:

- Provide a calm, quiet space for relaxation.
- Create a designated area with minimal distractions.
- Consider using a crate, ex-pen, or puppy-proofed space.
- As they age, maintaining this skill to be able to settle is vital for a happy dog.

As your puppy's world becomes more stimulating, quality naps can become a challenge. Setting up a conducive sleep environment helps them settle better and ensures they get the rest necessary for their well-being.

Remember, sleep is the golden solution to many puppy struggles, promoting their overall happiness and growth.



Should You Use A Crate?

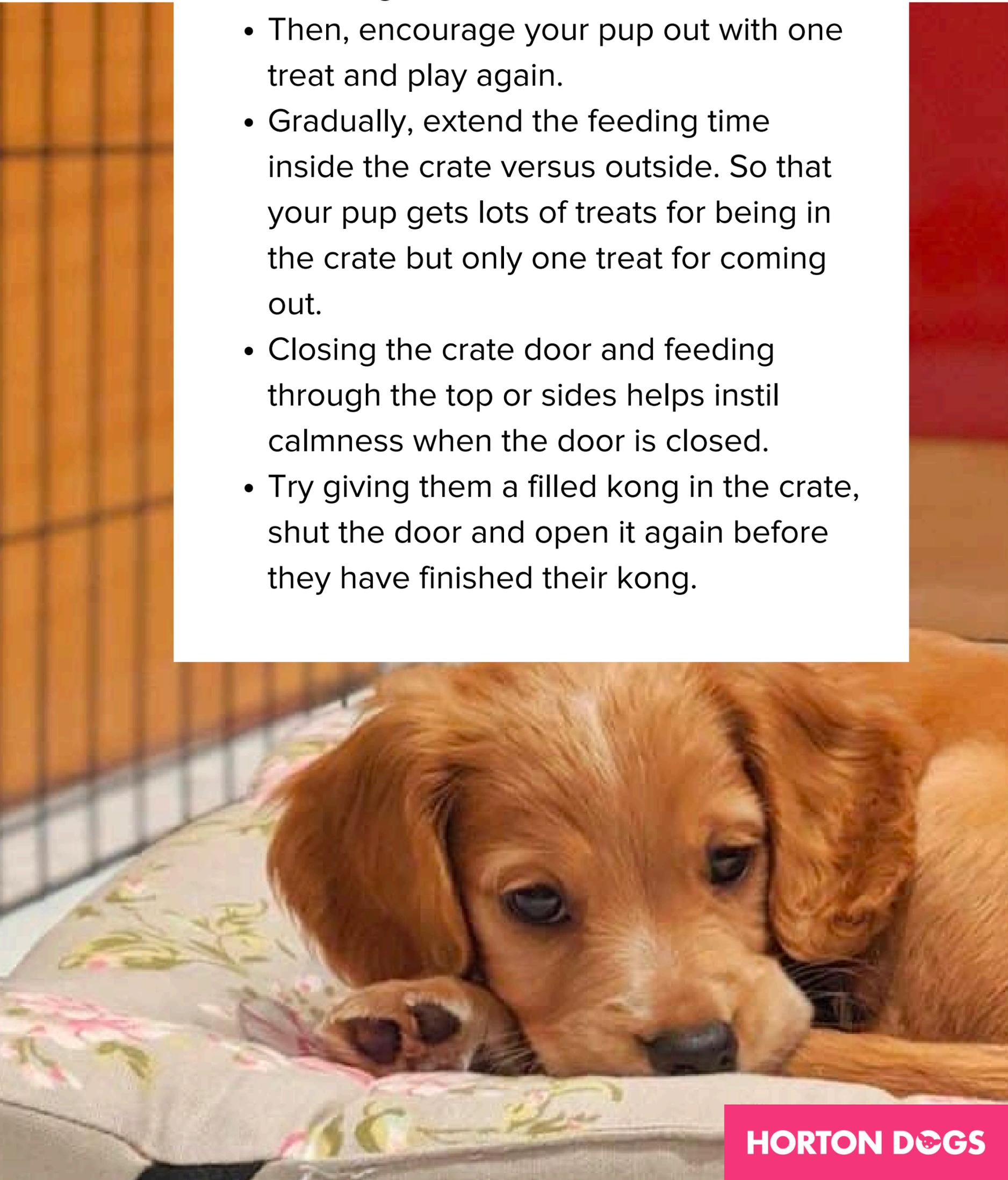
A crate can be a good way to encourage rest but also keeps them safe if you are not watching them. With this game, we want to grow a positive association with the crate so it becomes their den, their safe space to nap, and a space for relaxing. It can also be used to work on building confidence alone and preventing separation anxiety.



Game #1: Learning to Love The Crate

For this game, go at your puppy's pace, if they are worried by the crate then slow down and let them lead the learning. You may want to use really tasty treats to just reward them for being next to the crate to begin with.

- Simply throw treats inside the crate and reward your pup swiftly for entering by throwing in more treats.
- Then, encourage your pup out with one treat and play again.
- Gradually, extend the feeding time inside the crate versus outside. So that your pup gets lots of treats for being in the crate but only one treat for coming out.
- Closing the crate door and feeding through the top or sides helps instil calmness when the door is closed.
- Try giving them a filled kong in the crate, shut the door and open it again before they have finished their kong.



Too Much Freedom:

Excess freedom can contribute to puppy biting.

Overwhelming them with too much choice and access to their surroundings can lead to information overload.

Puppies are constantly learning from their environment, but too much stimuli can cause stress, potentially resulting in inadequate sleep and biting.

Giving your pup an enclosed space to relax is crucial so they don't get overstimulated. While they should have access to you, managing their choices can prevent poor decisions. Creating safe areas like crates or puppy-proofed spaces limits their opportunity to rehearse negative behaviours.

By managing their environment, you help them establish good habits and limit their inclination to bite. Remember, dogs get good at what they practice, so setting up their spaces so they can't make too many wrong choices is key. As they grow, this behaviour tends to fade, and you can start to open up their environment and give them more responsibility.



Frustration and Excitement:

Oddly, when a puppy is hyperactive, the logical fix can mislead us. You'd think an overly energetic pup needs more exercise, right? But this can lead to constant restlessness. More doesn't always mean better.

if we continue to try to 'tire them out' we may end up with heightened stamina and extended chaotic behaviour, it's a bit like sending them to the gym to get fitter and fitter!

So, what's the solution? Prioritise calmness. Teaching your pup to regulate emotions, manage energy levels and learn to settle can help empower them to overcome challenges.

Grow calmness, it's the key for a lot of puppy struggles. While adequate exercise is vital, maintaining their mental well-being also helps address the biting issue. This strategy covers various reasons for your puppy's biting tendencies. See the next game to find out how!



Game #2: Settle to a Bed

Take a look at the crate game and apply the same first steps but on a bed instead.

- Place a couple of treats onto a bed, as your puppy goes onto the bed to eat the treats say “yes” and place a few more treats onto the bed.
- Then take a step away and come right back placing more treats on the bed.
- If they come off the bed just go back to the first step.

Here is a video tutorial for this game

<https://vimeo.com/781848043/40afa1b79a>

There are many more layers you can build on this so do ask Cathy for further help if you need it.



Enhance Mental Enrichment:

What does mental enrichment mean? It's about giving your pup or dog a chance to engage their problem-solving skills.

Here are some mental enrichment ideas:

- Nose games such as searching for their toy.
- Challenges requiring thinking, such as teaching them something new.
- Problem-solving food toys such Kongs and puzzles



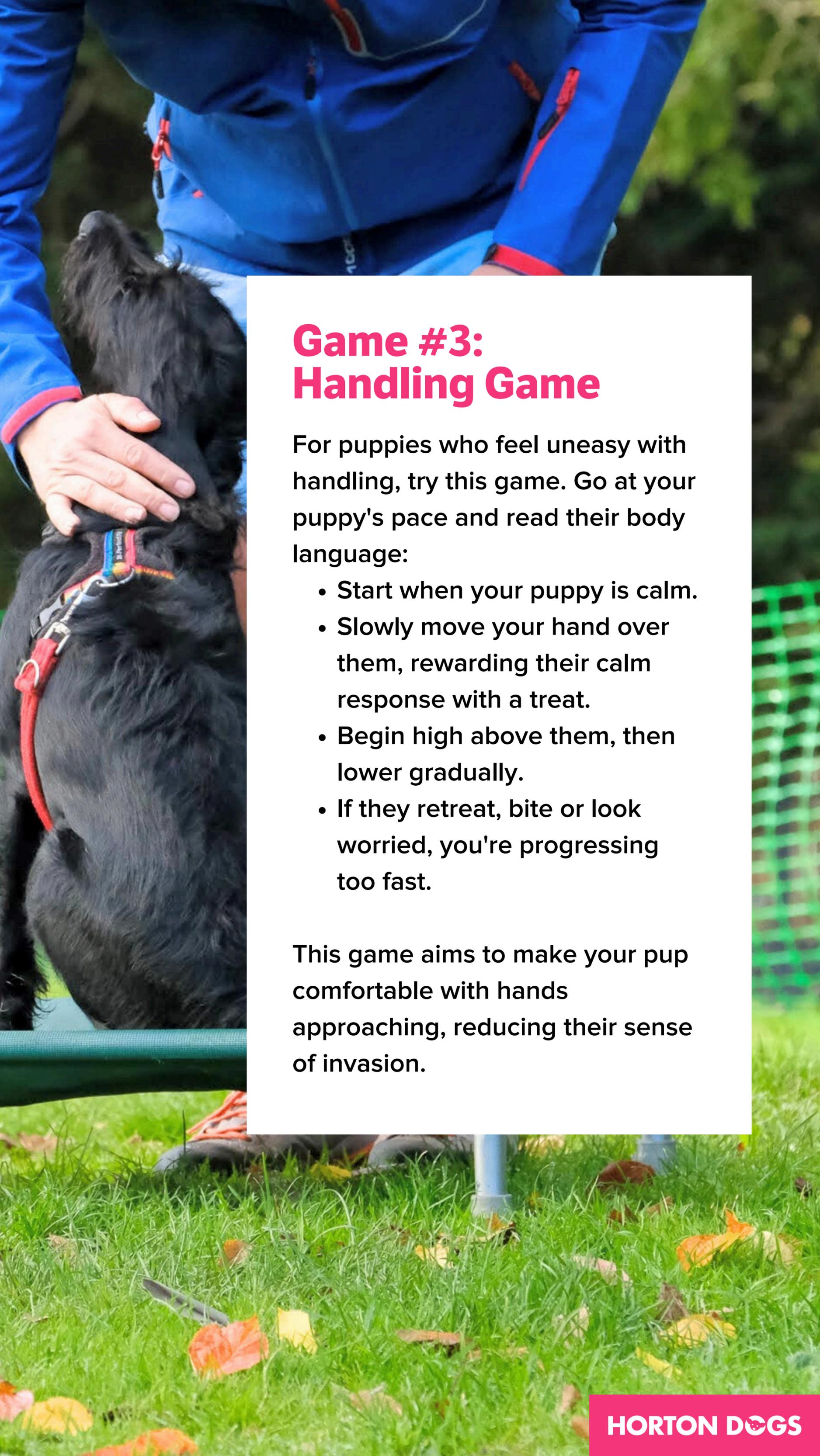
Self-Defence Behaviour:

Puppies might resort to biting out of self-defence. This can occur when they feel they have no other option. Overhandling without enjoyment, frequent grabbing of their collar to correct mistakes, even just being stroked on the head, picked up or putting their harness on can trigger this response.

Usually a bit of awareness of what our puppies like or dislike can really help.



If you suspect your puppy might be experiencing this, reach out to Cathy for assistance. She can provide you with straightforward steps to improve the situation. Allow your puppy to drag a lead in the house so that you can use it to stop them chasing the cat or the kids, less hands on approach while you work through building confidence in this area.

A person wearing a blue jacket with red accents is petting a black dog's head. The dog is wearing a red collar with a metal buckle. The background is a grassy area with some fallen leaves and a green fence.

Game #3: Handling Game

For puppies who feel uneasy with handling, try this game. Go at your puppy's pace and read their body language:

- Start when your puppy is calm.
- Slowly move your hand over them, rewarding their calm response with a treat.
- Begin high above them, then lower gradually.
- If they retreat, bite or look worried, you're progressing too fast.

This game aims to make your pup comfortable with hands approaching, reducing their sense of invasion.



Understanding Your Puppy's signals:

Become your puppy's expert and notice the cues that biting tendencies might arise. Watch for signs of tiredness or over excitement, and have the solutions mentioned earlier at the ready. Encourage rest when needed and provide suitable outlets to channel their energy.

Patience and Understanding

As you journey through the challenges of puppy biting, remember that patience and understanding are key. With the insights and strategies shared in this eBook, you'll be better equipped to guide your furry companion toward healthier habits, fostering a positive and nurturing relationship for both of you.

For further assistance with puppy biting challenges, consider reaching out to Cathy for personalised one-to-one sessions. Your puppy's behaviour can be effectively addressed through dedicated guidance.

