

Jumping on People

Jumping up to greet us is a natural behavior for dogs. What we humans do is reinforce the jumping by giving the dog attention for it by either petting or praising, or by getting upset or excited when the dog jumps. Either way, the dog is learning that jumping gets him attention, and attention is just what your dog wants.

The solution to changing your dog's jumping behavior is to teach him an alternate way to greet people and by not allowing him to get reinforced for jumping on people.

Why Your Dog Jumps

Friendly dogs want to greet your face

Puppies learn from being raised in their litter to greet their mother by licking her in the face, particularly on the chin and ears. When puppies get older and spend more time socializing with other dogs and people they will want to greet them the same way. As puppies, this behavior is extremely sweet and endearing but as the dog grows up it becomes unacceptable in greeting situations.

If you have recently acquired your dog or puppy it is important to set the rules and boundaries from the start rather than allowing your dog to practice behaviors that will not be acceptable in the future. If you allow your dog to jump up on you during greetings or during play it will likely be very confusing to your dog if you then do not allow them to jump on others. You must be the teacher for your dog to learn how to greet you and others the same way.

How to teach your dog not to jump on people

1. Reward your dog for keeping all four feet on the floor. If your dog jumps up, move your body out of the way so that his feet never make contact with you. If your dog's feet make contact, move your body so that his feet fall off then



Additional Resources

Please contact our Behavior Team to speak with a skilled behavior specialist.

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Some people recommend to put your knee in the dog's chest or squeeze his feet when he jumps up but this could reinforce the behavior and cause the jumping to get worse instead of better since many dogs will misinterpret this as you wanting to play with them.

immediately pet and praise him for having his feet on the floor. After several practice sessions of this then you should require your dog to keep his feet on the floor for at least 3 seconds before he gets pets and praise. You want your dog to learn that jumping up gets him nothing. If he does not grasp the concept after 3 tries in a row remove him from the area by putting him in a crate or in a room with a closed door or remove yourself. Repeat from the beginning at the next interaction.

2. Teach your dog to sit. Practice sit for food rewards in a variety of locations, especially those places where the jumping takes place the most (by the front door, before setting down the food bowl, outside, etc.) Train your dog starting with as little distractions as possible and in a place where people will not approach your dog so that he doesn't inadvertently get rewarded for jumping on someone before your training is complete. If someone approaches you and asks to pet your dog let them know that he is in training and is not ready yet.
3. After your dog has learned to sit, repeat step 1 but require your dog to sit before he gets pets and praise. As your dog gets better, ask him to sit and wait at least 3 seconds before he receives any pets or praise. If you keep your dog in a kennel at any time you can also require that he sits before coming out of the kennel. By asking your dog to sit before getting attention you are teaching him to perform a behavior that is incompatible with jumping.
4. Prevent your dog from jumping on other people. You can either leash your dog and keep him outside of jumping range from other people, or you can put him in another room or kennel when people visit so that he is unable to jump up on them. If your visitors would like to help with training you should put your dog on leash and instruct them to do step 1 and 2 with your dog. If you have trained your dog well enough before you start practicing with other people your dog might even learn that it is best to sit for all good things from people.

Other tips to teaching your dog to not jump

1. **Reward him when he ISN'T jumping up.** It's as important to praise for what you do want as it is to reprimand what you don't. Any time your dog would be most likely to jump and doesn't, give him plenty of calm praise in the way of treats, toys or voice.
2. **Make homecoming mellow.** Your dog will be much calmer if you don't make a big deal out of coming home at the end of the day. If you get excited with your dog when you come home, he'll be much more likely to jump on you and associate people coming through the door with the dog thinking, "it's time for me to get excited." When you come home, ignore your dog for a few minutes giving him/her a chance to calm down, then give your dog attention.
3. **Have EVERYONE coming into your house ignore the dog when they arrive.** Instruct people ahead of time to ignore dog completely when they arrive. Do not look at, talk to, or acknowledge in any way for the first 5 minutes they are there. This will greatly reduce the dog's excitement level.
4. **Clear the decks.** It's difficult even for a well-trained dog not to get excited when company comes over. Put your dog away from the door by having hold onto his leash or put him in his kennel, when you initially bring your guests. Allow him to visit only once everyone has settled in.