

Teaching a Dog: Not to Jump Up

Why do dogs jump up?

There are a variety of reasons why your dog may jump up at you and your family; they may be super excited to see you and want to get as close to you as possible. They may be a bit nervous and want to tell you they are friendly and not a threat – dogs do this by licking your face! Many dogs jump up because they have been trained to do so, even though their owners did not mean to teach them this!

What can you do about it?

The first steps to be successful are:

- Find out why your dog is jumping in the first place. Do they want your attention? Are they nervous? Are they full of energy?
- Interrupting the behavior is helpful if your dog jumps because they are too energetic or have learned that it is fun to do so.
- Ignore the behavior if it is safe to do so, and if your dog jumps up for attention. Be sure any guests your dog meets are aware of the protocol so they do not inadvertently reward jumping behaviors by saying “No” or pushing the dog off. Dogs who just want attention will keep jumping up because “No!” and being touched are still rewarding to them!
- Manage the behavior by not allowing your dog to jump in the first place. If you are having visitors over, be pro-active by putting the dog in a crate, behind a baby gate, or by putting a leash on them so you can prevent any jumping. If you are out on a walk and a person is approaching, step on your dog’s leash so they can stand comfortably, but are unable to put their front paws on the person.
- Teach your dog that other behaviors, such as sitting or standing quietly, will get them what they want instead, like pets, praise, treats or your attention!



Training Techniques



There are lots of easy techniques you can use to get your dog to choose not to jump up on people. Some examples are:

Ignoring the Dog

Dog jumps up → you turn your back to them and ignore them completely → dog stops jumping → ask dog for a different behavior → dog listens → give the dog attention!

Troubleshooting: If you are unable to completely ignore your jumping dog because they are too big or their nails are scratching you, try to get them to do a different behavior BEFORE they start jumping! For example:

You come home → dog is at the door, ready to jump up → tell the dog to lie down → don't interact with the dog until they have listened to you

Step Away Game

For this game, you can either put your dog on a leash and tie them to something heavy, or have another person hold the leash.

1. Start by standing several feet away from your dog.
2. If they are sitting or standing politely you may start to approach them to pet them.
3. As soon as they lift their front paws off the ground, quickly step back just out of their reach!
 - a. The person holding the leash should NOT pull the dog back. They are just an “anchor”. YOU are the trainer!
4. As soon as their feet are all on the floor again, start to re-approach.
 - a. This may require a lot of back-and-forth movements from you at first before your dog realizes “Oh, they only come close to me when I’m NOT jumping!”
5. If you are able to get close to your dog without them picking their feet up, reward them with a treat and pets.
 - a. This may excite them and cause them to jump again, so be ready to step out of their reach!
6. Keep repeating this exercise, gradually making yourself more animated and exciting – your dog needs to learn to not jump up no matter how active or happy you are!

Step-Stop-Sit

The principle of this protocol is that “when you are not moving, your dog is not moving”.

1. Teach your dog “Sit”.
2. Walk with your dog on leash, randomly freeze, and have your dog sit. Reward them for sitting and repeat in locations where your dog tends to jump or get excited the most.
 - a. Eventually they should sit as soon as you stop walking, without you asking them to.
3. Move around in a more animated way with your dog still on leash -freeze randomly and wait for them to sit. Reward them for sitting, then repeat.
 - a. Eventually they should sit as soon as you become still.
4. Practice this in more exciting settings, gradually building up to working in the scenarios where your dog usually becomes overly-aroused, such as when visitors are at the door.