

NO MORE JUMPING!

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Why is jumping up one of the most common problems encountered in young dogs?

The most likely cause is the fact that we carry puppies around, instead of putting them on a leash and making them keep all four feet on the floor. Hence they get used to the feeling of being close to our faces. Many will continue to jump up towards faces when greeting people, even as they get older.

There are many different ways to teach proper greeting behavior, but what I have found works best is to teach internalized impulse control. Internalized impulse control means simply that we eventually want the dog to make the correct choice by himself. If trained in this manner, he will, within a month or so of training, start choosing the correct behavior without receiving treats or correction.



How do we get to this point? The most popular approach in training books promoting positive methods is to ignore the jumping up and teach the dog to sit instead. There is some validity to this approach; however there are also problems with using this approach alone. For example, we are supposed to lure the dog into a sit with a cookie, and ask our visitors to ignore the jumping up behavior, and reward sitting with a treat. What if our dog is not food-motivated, or perhaps he is so excited about visitors that he ignores treats? Or perhaps he is a rather menacing looking breed, like a Rottweiler, yet he is overly friendly with strangers. Our visitors may be so taken aback by a huge muscular dog jumping on them that they are afraid to hand him a cookie. The biggest drawback with this approach though, is that it only teaches the replacement behavior but does not also give a consequence for choosing to jump instead of choosing the newly learned behavior.)

Start the process by training him to sit when greeting family members, without the distraction of strangers present. If your dog is highly food motivated, you can lure him into the sit. Hold the treat level with his nose and back it over his

head until his rear plops on the ground. Be sure not to hold the treat up too high, or this will cause him to jump up to reach it. Keep it right on his nose like it is a magnet that is pulling him into the position that you desire.

Once he sits, say "good" or "yes" and if he remains sitting, give the treat. If he pops up, then simply walk away and encourage him to come to you. As pup comes towards you, walk forward into him for a few steps (which forces him to walk backwards) and again ask him to sit, luring him into position with the treat. As soon as he sits, praise immediately "good boy" or "yes!" and give the treat **IF HIS BOTTOM IS STILL ON THE FLOOR**. Very important to praise **BEFORE**

the cookie, so that he is becoming conditioned to the praise. In order for pup to eventually do this for praise alone, we must condition him to hearing praise BEFORE the food treat. Whatever comes *before* will eventually get you the same response as your primary reinforcer.

If your dog is not food oriented or if you prefer to train without treats, then as pup comes to you, before he has a chance to jump up, simply reach for his collar underneath his chin and pull his head up so that his head goes up, rear goes down. Praise him softly as he remains sitting (do not use an excited tone of voice, as this will cause him to pop back up.) Remember to walk into him as you are teaching him not to jump. Walking forward into the dog will make jumping up more difficult for him. It is also imperative to keep your hands low. If you walk backwards, with your hands up near your chest, then you are actually inviting the dog to jump on you. Walking forward into the dog, keeping your hands low, has the opposite effect.

If you are consistent in requiring the sit when your dog greets you, your dog will, within a week or two, begin to understand that there is a reward for sitting when he greets people. One of the first rules in solving any behavior problem is to teach a replacement behavior, so once he starts sitting when he approaches family members, we have taught a replacement for jumping up. However, we have probably not taken away his desire to jump up, because he has received no negative consequence for doing so. As quickly as he begins understanding another way to greet people (sitting) then add a consequence for choosing to jump up instead. A few, very few, dogs will consider the owner ignoring the jumping up as a negative consequence (as in the method which says you simply ignore the incorrect behavior, reward the correct behavior and the dog will "get" it.)



Dogs, like people, learn fastest if there is both a positive (praise for sitting) for the correct behavior, and an unpleasant consequence for the incorrect behavior. There are several different negatives we can use as a consequence for jumping up. Let's discuss the pros and cons of each.

A common method is to squirt the dog with a water bottle if he jumps up. I have found this method to have several drawbacks. First, this method tends to be "tool dependent", in that if you do not have the water bottle in your hand, the dog will still attempt to jump. Second, some dogs LIKE to be squirted with water. Last, it can be hard to get the timing correct, and if timing is not correct, the dog will not understand that the water blast was due to his feet leaving the floor (versus due to him approaching a visitor for example.)

A method which works well for most dogs is to have the dog drag a leash, and the moment he even thinks about jumping up, step on the leash, so the dog is "self-corrected" by the leash holding him down when he tries to pop up. This requires having the dog on leash each time you expect visitors, and it works best if you say nothing - remember, we want the dog to internalize, we want him to realize it was his action (of jumping up) that caused the unpleasant feeling. As soon as you step on the leash, you will then tell the dog what you do what him to do, so you would quickly guide him into a sit and praise him and/or pet him.

You can also use a leash correction while you are holding the leash. This can be particularly effective if your dog jumps up on strangers when you meet people on your walks. Stand slightly behind the dog, and when he starts to jump up (not after he is already jumping on the person), give a quick collar correction. This works best with a slip (chain or nylon) training collar. If you have not used this type of collar before, please work with a trainer who can show you how to use it correctly. As with any correction for jumping up, do not say anything while giving the correction (because a lot of "no, no, don't jump" is giving the dog attention for the behavior) but simply redirect the dog into the sit, and then give him attention. Of course let others pet him, if he remains sitting. It works best to position the dog into the sit (or lure him if you are using the treat method) without using the command "sit" (because we are using repetition to help the dog learn to make the choice on his own, so we do not want him to wait for a verbal cue.)

Last but not least, remote collar training, if used humanely, can be the most effective method for teaching a dog not to jump up. Use only a collar that can be adjusted to very low levels (like a Dogtra or Tri-tronics Pro model) so that the level used is enough to get the dog's attention, but not enough to cause undue stress. After determining the correct level (work with an experienced electronic collar trainer for this), you simply touch the nick button the second the dog's feet come off the ground. The nick button (also called momentary on some collars) will give a fraction of a second of stimulus, as a correction. In any case, the point is to have a well-timed correction (it happens at the very second the inappropriate behavior occurs) and to keep it as impersonal as possible. Remain silent during the correction. If you are screaming at the dog, then he is receiving a lot of attention, and dogs are like kids, many of them actually like negative attention! Just as with methods mentioned above, immediately direct the dog to the appropriate replacement behavior (sitting for attention.)

To recap, teach the dog an appropriate replacement behavior (sitting whenever he greets anyone.) As soon as the dog understands the replacement behavior, then add a consequence for choosing to jump up. Be quiet as you give the correction, then redirect the dog into the sit. Do not praise, treat or pet the dog unless his bottom remains on the floor. If he pops up, walk into him, forcing him to walk backwards. This balanced approach of both rewarding appropriate behavior and correcting inappropriate behavior will help him learn quickly.

Nationally known trainer Mary Mazzeri states *"A balanced approach puts some responsibility for making choices on the shoulders of the dog. They know that they will both avoid discipline and earn rewards when they make the right choices."* I could not agree more, particularly when teaching dogs impulse control choices like proper greeting behavior.

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