

Jumping Up

When puppies are young, we tend to let them get away with behaviors that we would be less likely to tolerate once they're adults. Once they are older, jumping up can become a nuisance and can even be dangerous.

Why Do Dogs Jump?

Dogs jump up when they are excited and to seek your attention. If you have a dog that regularly does this, it is most likely because they get attention for it and therefore the behavior is reinforced. Both encouraging the jumping behavior by giving the dog pets as well as pushing the dog away and/or fussing at them to stop won't get the point across to your dog. Anything that provides the contact/interaction that they are wanting will result in reinforcing the behavior and for some it may become a game. Whether it is positive or negative attention, it is still attention in their book!

It is important to ask everyone interacting with your dog to not encourage jumping. Even if they say "It's fine! I don't mind!" Remind them that everyone the dog comes in contact with has a part to play in good manners.

Training Your Dog To Stop Jumping

Most of the time, dogs jump up when they are excited to greet someone. The best way to change this behavior is to work on showing your dog how to properly greet guests. They will never know unless we show them!

- Start with teaching your dog to sit politely when approached. They do best with consistency, so it will be your job to ask for this behavior every single time.
- When you first start training, put your dog in a separate room or behind a gate when letting guests in. This will keep them from rushing up out of excitement. When letting them out for introductions in the beginning it's advised to have them on leash for optimal control so that you are able to prevent any jumping.
- Only when they are sitting or have all four paws on the ground can they interact with the guests. An important management tool is to prevent your dog from rehearsing the bad behavior. If they jump up, lure or tug them away on the leash from the guest and ask them again to sit. (Please see our guide on teaching 'sit').
- When your dog is consistently sitting, you can even practice with yourself as the visitor. Put a bag of treats outside the door. Go outside and pick up a treat. When you enter, immediately ask your dog to "sit". You can also get a mat and set it up a little away from the door and get your dog to sit there. This will keep them from crowding the door.
- Make sure not to give any treats or praise until the dog is sitting. If your dog jumps on you, you can ignore him and turn away or even walk back out of the door and try again.

- Avoid using an angry tone and try to only ask him to “sit” once. To do this, ask for the behavior and then wait. Allow them time to think about what you’re wanting from them and eventually they will put two and two together.
- When your dog is doing well and greeting you with a sit when you walk through the door, you can start to add a knock or ring the doorbell. This can be a trigger for some dogs and can heighten their excitement.
- When they are doing well with that, you can start to practice with friends. Have them come to the door and knock (grabbing a treat on their way in). Ask your dog for a “sit” as they enter and have them reward them for a polite greeting.
- While they are learning, it will be important to reward your dog frequently for polite greetings. After lots of practice, you can start using only praise sometimes, but continue to use food rewards intermittently to maintain their attention. If you ever run into any snags, remember that you can always remove your dog from the situation to prevent the jumping and let them calm down.
- You can also practice the behavior by using the same exercise when on leash at the park, at the pet store, and when visiting other people’s homes. If people want to pet your dog, ask them not to approach unless they are sitting. If necessary, get them to sit using a treat. We want to make it as easy as possible for them to learn what they are supposed to do!

Good luck and happy wags from the AAA team!