

Fixing Problem Behaviors: **JUMPING UP**



As puppies, dogs are frequently rewarded for jumping up on a person's legs. They are cute and small, and it is oh so tempting to bend down and give the puppy the attention it wants from you. The behavior becomes more common the more people continue to offer the puppy attention for this behavior. And while this behavior may not bother you or your guest when your dog is an adorable puppy, it sure will be a bother when your dog is full grown.

If you have a puppy, it is important to never reward this behavior. Instead, get your puppy into the habit of sitting at your feet for attention. To do this, first teach your puppy the approach and sit game: Bait your hand with treats and let your pup get a whiff of the treats. Take a couple of steps backward, encouraging your dog to follow you. Come to a stop, and slowly draw your baited hand to your belly. This should draw the dog's attention upwards, which will cause the dog's hind end to be lowered into a sit. Once your dog's hindquarters are on the ground, give your dog a reward. Once your dog gets good at this game, ask the puppy to sit whenever he approaches you, and then reward him with some love and affection. If your puppy tries to jump on you at this time, immediately turn your body away and ignore. Once your puppy has all four feet on the floor, turn back to your puppy, ask for a sit, and reward. It is important that you NEVER reward your puppy for jumping on you. Always ignore this behavior, do not speak to the puppy or make eye contact. Any attention from you, even negative attention, is rewarding at this stage. Offer your puppy no attention until all four feet are on the floor.

If your dog is full grown and has been rewarded for jumping most of their life, it might take a little longer to un-teach your dog to jump. It is very important that your dog NEVER gets rewarded for jumping and that all your family members and any guest that comes to visit is on the same page. It is also important that you begin practicing proper greetings frequently so that you are able to communicate to your dog what you expect from him.



To practice, get a member of your family or a friend to help you. Have your dog on a leash. Practice sits with your dog at the beginning of the lesson. Ask your dog to sit, and reward. Repeat this about 5-10 times depending on how your dog is doing. Your dog needs to learn that sitting is VERY rewarding. Then ask your friend to approach your dog with low energy. If your dog jumps, have your friend immediately turn and walk away. Repeat this. Every time your dog tries to jump, your friend should walk away without saying anything. If your dog keeps all four feet on the floor, ask for a sit. If your dog sits, reward with a treat then have your friend pet the dog with low energy. Too much excitement can cause the dog to jump. If your dog sits when your friend approaches reward heavily. As your dog learns this game and begins sitting every time your friend approaches, have your friend approach the dog with more and more energy until your dog learns that no matter what, he has to sit when being greeted. If your dog becomes reliable at sitting for your friend, switch roles. You are far more exciting to your dog.

You can also play this game at your front door alone or with a friend. The dog can be off-leash for this exercise. Walk in the front door, if your dog jumps immediately walk back out of the door without saying anything or looking at the dog. This will teach your dog that jumping makes you leave. If you walk in and your dog does not jump, ask for a sit and then reward your dog with love and affection, and a yummy treat. If your dog sits automatically, reward heavily. If at any moment your dog jumps, walk back out. You can play this game with other members of your family coming in the door while you are inside with the dog. This will teach your dog that these rules apply with EVERYONE. Not just you.

