

# Jumping Up

Most dogs jump up for one simple reason – to get our attention! Dogs do whatever works well for them, so if you reward them with attention when they jump up, they'll keep doing it. We often encourage jumping up in puppies when they're small and cute, but this can make things confusing for them when they grow up and we no longer want them to behave like this. Even when we try to discourage dogs from jumping up by telling them not to, some may still find this rewarding because they enjoy our attention so much!

For other dogs though, telling them off for jumping up could be scary and distressing. They may become anxious or confused about your relationship with them, as sometimes you are more than happy to give them a fuss, but at times when they've jumped up you may appear agitated and cross. This confusion may cause some dogs to jump up more because they anxiously want to connect with you and make things feel better.

## Teaching your dog not to jump up

Your dog will need to learn that keeping all four paws on the floor gains them your attention and praise, and that jumping up doesn't gain them anything. There are two simple steps to teaching your dog not to jump up:

- 🐾 **Step 1:** Reward your dog when all four paws are on the floor with praise/attention
- 🐾 **Step 2:** Ignore your dog if they jump up – don't react at all

Be prepared that things may get a bit worse before they get a lot better! When you start to ignore your dog for jumping up, you may find they appear confused. Especially if this behaviour previously would have resulted in you looking at them, touching them and speaking to them, regardless of what you might be saying. A dog might try even harder to get the response they are expecting, so you may initially see your dog jumping up with more intensity, determined to get you to react. Don't worry, this is part of the learning process. This may be a frustrating time for you, but being consistent and no longer giving them any attention will mean that over time and repetition your dog is learning that there is no point doing this behaviour. They are also learning that keeping all four paws on the floor does get your attention, and they can do that instead because you'll always reward them!



## Teach your dog to do something else instead

We usually say 'hello' when we greet each other, and our clever dogs quickly learn that these words mean we're about to interact with people, and that these people might give them a fuss or a biscuit! So just hearing the words and seeing someone approaching can make our dogs suddenly become very excited, because they're expecting a fun interaction with someone.

It can be difficult for dogs to learn to control themselves, especially when they're very excited. Giving them something specific to do and rewarding them for doing it can be a useful way to help them. You can teach your dog to meet people by sitting and waiting for attention. Take some tasty treats and start practising in a place where there aren't many distractions or people, so it's easy for your dog to concentrate.

- 🐾 **Step 1:** With your dog on lead and walking next to you, stop walking, say 'hello' out loud to nobody, and use the treat to lure your dog into a sitting position next to you. Once they're sitting, give them the treat and praise them. Then walk along again. Our handout on **Marker Use and Teaching Sit and Down** gives full instructions.
- 🐾 **Step 2:** Repeat this several times until your dog starts to sit as soon as you stop and say 'hello'. This shows they understand that the quicker they sit when you say 'hello', the quicker they will get their treat!

- 🐾 **Step 3:** Try keeping the treat out of sight in your pocket or treat pouch, and no longer lure your dog into a sitting position. Just produce the reward once they have sat down
- 🐾 **Step 4:** Start to build in distractions and practise in a slightly busier environment. Your dog might find this harder so you may want to use an even tastier treat to reward their efforts. You may need to go back to luring your dog if they find this stage difficult, which isn't a problem. Just use the treat to lure them until your dog understands, and then progress to the treat being out of sight again.
- 🐾 **Step 5:** When your dog quickly sits whenever you stop and say 'hello', regardless of what else is happening around you, you can progress to meeting someone. Ask a friend or relative to help you by walking towards you and your dog, and when you get close simply stop and reward your dog for sitting as you say 'hello'. Have a special treat ready to reward this because it may be tricky for your dog!
- 🐾 **Step 6:** Continue to give your dog treats to keep them sitting. Then as a bonus reward for sitting with all four paws on the floor, and if all parties are comfortable to, you can allow the person to give your dog a treat, then say hello and give your dog a fuss.
- 🐾 **Step 7:** Your dog can continue to be rewarded as long as all four paws remain on the floor. If they suddenly become excited because the interaction is such fun for them, then just ignore them. Asking them to sit back down at this point may not work if they're too excited, so just wait calmly for them to realise their behaviour is getting them no attention at all. Then reward again once they have all four paws on the floor.
- 🐾 **Step 8:** Now you can start to practise in different environments, so that your dog learns to do this wherever they may be. Ultimately, you should aim to practise this when you greet visitors at your front door and bring them inside your home. If your dog struggles staying calm when you have guests, our handout on **Visitor Training** provides lots of tips on how to help them.



## The golden rules of training – consistency and timing

- 🐾 If you're consistent your dog will quickly learn what works to get your attention and what doesn't. Without consistency your dog may become confused and try everything to see what behaviour works best. Make sure your family and friends are on board with training and coach any visitors who may interact with your dog before they arrive!
- 🐾 Timing your rewards, in this case your attention, will make the difference between your dog learning to jump up or not to jump up. Make sure you act quickly and reward your dog only when all four feet are on the ground. You might feel like a Yo-Yo to begin with, but if you're consistent it won't take long for your dog to learn.

Most dogs jump up simply because they are happy to see people and want to say hello, however your dog may also jump up to ask for your attention if they are feeling worried about something. If you think your dog is jumping up to get your attention because they are feeling scared, for example due to a dog or person approaching, it is best to reassure them and calmly move them away from the scary situation. Your dog may benefit from building up confidence in different situations. Our handouts on **Building Confidence Outdoors** and **Building Confidence in General** provide lots of useful tips.

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The advice contained in this handout is of a general nature and is no substitute for specific behavioural or veterinary advice. If you are worried about your dog, then do consult your vet.