



No Jumping Up

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Jumping Up

Dogs jump up at people for a number of different reasons – mostly to be social. But no matter how friendly, it can cause havoc when out on walks and can devastate your social life at home!

No one likes being jumped on when they are wearing their best suit or the dog is covered in mud. Worse than just being a nuisance, for children and the elderly it can also be a safety risk.

Trying to punish your dog for jumping up is always counter-productive. It can damage your relationship or even make the problem worse, because for some dogs even negative attention is better than none!

Prevention is better than cure

Prevention is vital if you have a young puppy or a new dog. The trick here is to teach your dog what you DO want him to do when he greets someone – keep all four paws on the floor.

This method simply requires a consistent approach – and following one simple rule - each and every time your dog greets someone nicely, he needs to be rewarded with a click (or use your clicker word, “Click” to mark the correct behaviour) and a treat (or two!) which is placed ON THE GROUND between his front paws (not from your hand above his head).

This works because it's physically impossible for your dog to jump up and look down at the same time – so you are rewarding downward thoughts and behaviours.

It also has the added benefit that you can praise and reward your dog for doing the right thing, rather than nagging him for 'bad' behaviour.



How?

Start with yourself and your family. Keep some food treats at strategic points around the house (such as by the front door), or in your pocket, and simply click (or use your clicker word, "Click") before he jumps up when you greet him, then pop a treat on the floor in between his front paws. Most pups need about 12-20 repetitions of this to get the idea that your approach means say hello, then 'look down'.

This then becomes a habit!

You can also encourage visitors to help train your dog for you. To make this work, you will need to employ some human psychology. Keep a toy, such as a Kong, ready with some food treats in it by the front door. Have your dog on a lead if you can predict when a visitor will arrive. When someone comes to the door, no matter whether it's a delivery man or a familiar friend, ask them if they would please help with your dog's training by giving your dog his special toy.

Your visitor can then give your dog the toy by placing it on the ground in front of him – he can then pick it up and move away to chew it – which is an advantage if you have visitors, as he'll be distracted and calm while they come in and sit down.

Rehab for practised jumpers

If you already have a problem with jumping up, then as with most training, consistency is the key. If you have just one member of the family or someone who regularly visits who says, "I don't mind," then you are doomed to failure. Most dogs jump up to make friends, to greet their family, and to get attention. If this works, even randomly, then they will pursue the habit forever.

Follow the programme below to create zero tolerance of jumping up – but still allow your dog to enjoy greeting people.

1. Start a new routine of greeting your dog low down (chest rubs are better than head strokes because of this) and click (or use your clicker word, "Click") before he jumps when you say hello, then pop food treats on the floor in front of him to eat.

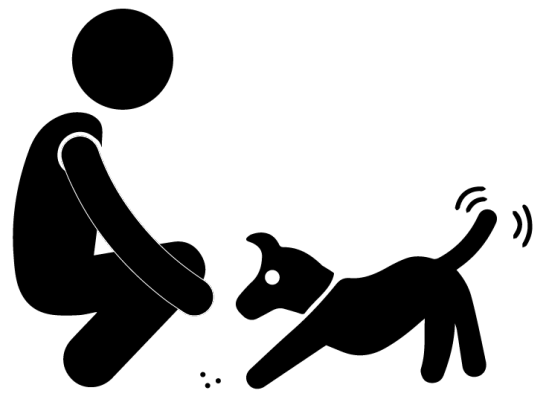
2. If your dog goes to jump up, step to the side and fold your arms. Don't look at him, talk to him or try to touch him. The complete lack of interaction and excitement gives a strong, clear signal that he will not get any attention from jumping up.

3. Praise and pet only when all four feet are on the floor, and scatter food treats on the ground in front of him (never from your hand), as this will help him focus on staying down – not launching himself upwards.

4. It's often suggested that we teach 'sit to greet' – and this is a great theory that works well for some dogs, but not all. This is because the sit position puts the dog in the perfect dynamic position for an upward launch – just think about a dolphin exiting the water and you'll know what I mean! If your dog is one that finds this fun, then teaching him that all four paws on the floor, or even the down position is safer – the food treats must still be fed on the floor though.

Once your dog starts to understand that greeting behaviours need to be done with all four paws on the floor, you need to 'proof' the behaviour.

This means very gradually doing some of the things that might tempt him to jump up, and then clicking (or using a clicker word) for keeping his feet on the ground, and giving him treats on the floor for getting it right.



The sorts of human behaviours that often trigger jumping up are:

- Hands moving upwards (kids with their hands in the air are all too tempting)
- Moving backwards away from the dog
- Visitors unexpectedly arriving at the door
- When the dog is on lead and someone comes up to them in the street
- When the dog is sitting (it's the perfect dynamic position to launch themselves upwards)
- When they are excited about something else, such as playing or running around
- When the dog knows you have treats or food in your hand
- When you are upright and the dog is small and wants to reach your face or be picked up



Proofing means that you need to very gently simulate these actions (or the ones that trigger your dog to jump up) but keep the movements small enough that your dog uses self-control and does not jump up. Then you can click (or use your clicker word, "Click" to mark the correct behaviour) and give him treats – on the floor!

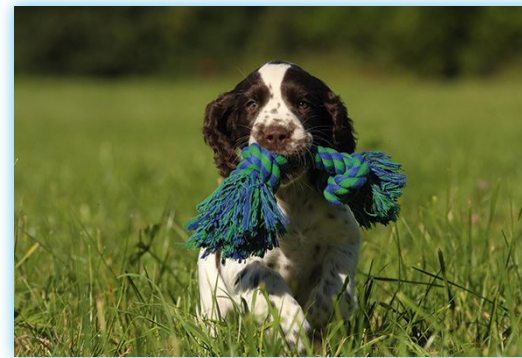
Build up these distractions until nothing on earth can tempt him to jump up – because all the rewards arrive when he chooses a different behaviour.

Utilise your dog's natural breed drives

Many gundogs are gregarious and highly social and love to leap all over people.

However, send them to fetch a toy and it miraculously seems to stop them jumping up once they have it in their mouth.

Make it a rule that you only say hello if they bring you a teddy or a soft toy – you can stop jumping up almost instantly and make them happy to be carrying out a natural behaviour at the same time.



If your dog is reluctant to pick up a toy in the presence of something exciting, you can use a Kong toy with food in it, or a soft zip-up bag (fluffy pencil cases are brilliant) with food in it, just to get them started.

A final word

Just occasionally, owners tell me that they like their dogs to jump up at them for attention. That's fine, but only on cue! In other words, the behaviour should only ever happen when you say that it can – so follow the advice above, and then (and only then) you can teach 'jump up at me' as a trained trick.