

PET TRAINING BEHAVIOR GUIDE

Jumping on People



Jumping up on people can be an annoying and dangerous habit. It doesn't take a very big dog to knock over a child or scratch up a face or arms. Even those of you that have little dogs should be encouraged to teach your dogs not to jump up without permission. Here are some tips to help discourage jumping:

- Teach a strong, fast, reliable sit. If the dog is sitting, he cannot be jumping.
- Ignore the dog when he jumps up and turn/walk away. Ignoring the dog means not giving him eye contact, speaking to him, or touching him. Most dogs are jumping for attention and if jumping is ignored they will try another method to get attention.
- If you ignore the dog when he jumps, make sure to pay attention to him after he's got all four feet on the floor and 5-10 seconds have passed since the jump. Dogs are great at learning patterns and/or chaining behaviors together. If we give attention to the dog immediately after he puts his feet on the floor, he's likely to learn a pattern of jump up-get off-get attention.
- For some dogs, the reinforcement for jumping is the physical contact they receive. If you have a dog that is consistently ignored when he jumps and is not picking up a pattern as mentioned above, the physical contact may be the reinforcer. If that's the case, care must be taken to make sure he does not make contact when he jumps. This can be accomplished by having him on the other side of a barrier (baby gate, crate, door, etc.) or by having him on leash (so the person can stay out of reach of his paws). The dog should be cued to sit before he is able to reach the person.
- Some dogs will jump if you have something they want in your hands. The dog should be taught that he will never get what he wants by jumping. Having him sit before the leash goes on, the food bowl goes down, the toy gets thrown, etc., should accomplish this.
- Additionally, the dog should not be allowed to put his feet on the person while playing either. Often when playing tug (and possibly other games), the dog will put his front feet on the person for leverage or to push off. If this happens, the game should end immediately.
- When training the dog not to jump on people, any time his front feet are on a person, it should be considered jumping. This means if he places his front paws on someone while they are seated, even if done gently and slowly, it can strengthen the jumping behavior.
- Teaching other people not to give attention to the dog when he jumps can be difficult. It's best to be prepared with what to say to the person (i.e. "He's in training and needs to sit for petting"), have treats (to make the process easier), and manage the situation (have him on leash if necessary).
- The handler should be the person giving the treats for any proper greeting practice. This can help keep the dog calmer around the stranger and it prevents the dog from jumping on the person as they walk away. Instead, he'll be turning back to get his treat from the handler.
- When teaching a polite greeting, scared dogs don't usually jump on the strangers because they are not comfortable enough with them. This is one situation where it's best not to have the dog sit for the petting. Sitting is almost like a barrier for some dogs and they feel they cannot escape the "threat" (i.e. stranger). If the handler has told the dog to sit and they are nervous, they will be forced to disobey the handler to escape, tolerate the unpleasant thing, or display some aggression to make the unpleasant thing go away. If not told to "sit" or "stay" many dogs will show their discomfort by simply walking away from or choosing not to approach the stranger. The dog's comfort level should be respected and therefore only dogs that are very comfortable with people should be told to sit for petting. The handler should feel free to have the dog sit if the dog won't be forced to tolerate unwanted attention from the stranger.

