



Addressing Unwanted Jumping Behavior

Dogs jump up on people because it gets them attention – it works!

Think of it from your dog's point of view - they may get petting, verbal attention - even pushing the dog off may be interpreted as play behavior. Attention may reinforce the dog's behavior.

To stop jumping behavior, first make sure the behavior isn't rewarded/reinforced. This may mean ignoring the behavior (turning away, arms crossed), leaving the room, or giving your dog a short time out. Attention-seeking behavior that isn't rewarded is likely to decrease.

Equally important – reward/reinforce the behavior you DO want! Praise and reward for four-on-the-floor or ask for another behavior that's incompatible with jumping. Behavior that IS rewarded is likely to increase.

Other behaviors you can cue, incompatible with jumping:

- Sit
- Touch
- Go to mat
- Down

It's important to be 100% consistent. All members of the household should follow the same rules. For guests or others you meet, it can be helpful to tell them you are training your dog to be safe with children. They can pet or play with your dog AFTER your dog shows calm behavior. Remember - if your dog is randomly reinforced for a behavior (intermittent reinforcement), that behavior is likely to increase. The dog will keep trying to "hit the jackpot".

If your dog has gotten attention for jumping in the past, he/she will probably go through an "extinction burst" before the behavior begins to decrease. This means your dog may jump up even more in the beginning. Have you ever seen a child trying to get a parent's attention when the parent is engaged in conversation with another adult? The child says, "Mommy," gets no response, and then works up to a continuous string of "Mommy, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy..." If this happens, don't give up. Be patient and consistent! Your payoff will be the "jackpot" of a dog with all four paws planted firmly on the ground.

Rewards can be attention, petting, a toy, going outside, play, treats, or anything your dog perceives as a reward.





One idea: Keep a jar of treats at the front door, back door, or any place where you find yourself training or consistently asking for a particular behavior.

If your dog is jumping when he is on leash, you can step on the leash at a point where the dog can only “launch” a few inches. When the dog has “four on the floor” mark the behavior with a “yes!” or a click, and reward!

