



Behavior and Training Department

Resources

Jumping Up

Dogs jump up on people to solicit attention and interaction. There are a number of methods to discourage the behavior and encourage more appropriate interactions.

- Remove all attention. Dogs who jump up are trying to solicit attention. There are also many things people do inadvertently that encourage dogs to jump up such as saying “no” and pushing the dog down. If a dog is trying to solicit your attention and you respond in this manner you are reinforcing the behavior by giving the dog the attention it craves, even if it is considered negative attention by you.
- Be sure to educate people who approach your dog. Encourage them to avoid direct eye contact, approach in a quiet manner and keep the excitement level down. Encourage people to kneel down to greet a smaller dog to discourage jumping.
- Use a lightweight drag line connected to the dog’s leash. Stand on the leash leaving enough length for the dog to sit down comfortably; but not enough to jump-up. If the dog tries to jump-up, the dog will in effect “self correct” by reaching the end of the leash before getting to reach the person. Eventually, the dog will sit. Praise quietly and reward with a tasty treat. This method can work well when people approach to say hi on the street or enter your house to visit.
- Use a tie-down – you can connect one end to a heavy piece of furniture, a door knob or an eye bolt in the wall. Walk towards the dog while he is on the tie down. If he starts to jump up you will retreat and remove all attention, don’t touch or look at the dog. You may have to wait him out. When he sits praise calmly. Repeat the approach until the dog sits calmly as you come near. Remember to keep praise (verbal and gentle petting) calm and low key or you may excite the dog and encourage further jumping.
- It is much easier to teach a dog to DO something than it is to teach them NOT TO DO something. Instead of focusing on what you don’t want the dog to do, ask for what you DO want the dog to do. Ask for an alternate behavior such as “sit”. Practice “sit” beforehand when the dog is not excitable and jumping up so when they do jump up they will be all the more likely to comply. Reward heavily when they sit.
- Some dogs may be so excitable that sitting is more than they can handle at this stage. Start small and reward heavily for having “four on the floor” or all four feet on the floor. This can include a sit, down, or stand. If the dog starts to jump withhold all attention until all four feet return to the floor again.
- Jumping up at the door: If you have a friend who can work with you on this, have your friend ring the doorbell or knock. Go to open the door, your dog will likely follow you. Ask your dog to sit; praise and reward. If the dog starts to jump up, your friend should immediately back out of the doorway and close the door removing all attention. Repeat until the dog does not jump up for a few seconds and then praise and reward calmly. Over a period of a few weeks, wait for longer periods of time before praising and slowly reduce the treats.

Signing up for a training class is a great way to further work on jumping up and to develop more appropriate greeting behaviors for your dog.

When dealing with training and behavioral issues it is advised to get professional assistance. Sonoma Humane offers a variety of training classes, behavioral consultations, in-home training, and private sessions.

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