

Teaching Dogs Not To Jump Up On People

Most dogs, adult and puppy alike, jump on people because they are excited to meet or greet them. When small puppies jump on people most of us think it is cute, so we pet them vigorously thereby reinforcing their jumping up behavior. However, many of these same puppies grow up to be medium to large breed adults who continue to jump on people to greet them. Suddenly, it is not so cute, as well as potentially dangerous to the unexpected person who may be scratched or knocked over by the dog.

Teaching your dog not to jump on people is not difficult, but does require a bit of patience on the part of the teacher, especially when trying to train an adult dog who has been engaging in the behavior since puppyhood. The key is for your dog to learn an alternate behavior to engage in in place of jumping up. Just saying “no” is not enough because the dog does not know what to do instead.

The following instructions should help teach your dog not to jump up on people.

1. Teach your dog a “sit” command first.
2. As soon as your dog jumps up, cross your arms and turn your back to your dog. Do not say “no.” Instead, ask him to sit. Once he sits, reinforce him with a special treat, praise or petting. If you have a dog who simply will not sit on command, then reinforcing by giving a treat for 4 paws on the floor is acceptable.
3. Be consistent. Each and every time your dog jumps up, turn your back and ask him to sit. This applies to **everyone** who interacts with the dog. If even one person invites or simply tolerates the jumping up greeting, then your dog’s training will not be consistent. He will continue to jump up on people whenever he so chooses.

Some dogs, typically young dogs, will also become mouthy while jumping up to greet people. In most cases mouthy behavior while jumping up will extinguish because the dog is no longer in a heightened state of arousal, and no longer jumping up.