

Jumping Up

Jumping up is a **common behavior problem** facing many dog owners. It's annoying to feel like you're being attacked by an excited and overly exuberant dog the minute you step through your front door. It can also be dangerous for small children. The good news is that you can train a dog to stop jumping.

What Not to Do

A number of dog owners have heard about methods of training a dog not to jump that call for some form of punishment or **aversive**.

One such method is a knee to the chest. Another is having a dog **on a leash** and giving him leash corrections to get him off of you. There are several problems with these methods, including:

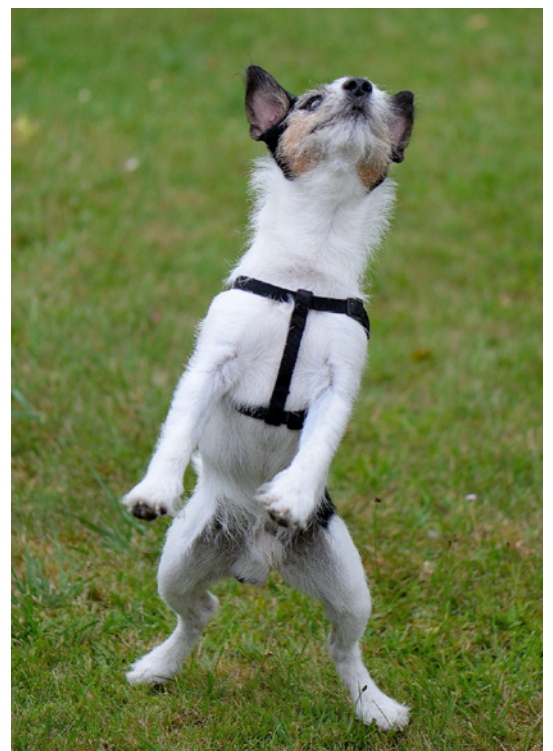
- If either method is done too hard or incorrectly, you can seriously injure your dog.
- When you use a knee to the chest, it may knock your dog down, but he may also interpret this as you playing with him. His response will be to jump up again to continue playing. You'll actually reinforce the behavior you're trying to stop.
- Your dog may learn not to jump up only when he's on a leash. Since most of us don't keep our dogs on leash 24/7, chances are your dog will have plenty of opportunities to get away with jumping.

Why Dogs Jump

There are a number of theories about why dogs jump up on people. You may have read about dominance or greeting behaviors in dogs. The truth is, however, that most dogs jump up to get your attention.

Many times we reinforce this behavior by giving them what they want, even if it's negative attention. Dogs don't necessarily realize that you pushing them off or yelling at them to get down is meant as punishment. Instead, they view it as exactly what they're seeking - attention from you. In this case, any attention from you is perceived as a reward.

It makes sense then that instead of rewarding them for jumping, we make it more rewarding for our dogs to keep all four paws on the floor.



Withhold Attention

The first part of teaching a dog not to jump involves withholding your attention. There are several ways you can do this:

- As soon as your dog jumps up, turn your back on him. Cross your arms over your chest, and don't make a sound. If the dog runs around to jump again, turn the other way so your back is again to him. Wait for him to stop jumping.
- Another method is to remove yourself altogether. If your dog jumps up when you walk in the door, turn around and walk back outside. If he jumps up when you're inside, walk out of the room. Wait a moment, and step back inside. Repeat this until your dog is calm.

Reward Good Behaviour

It helps when you're working on stopping unwanted jumping if you keep some **treats** close at hand. As soon as your dog is standing in front of you with all four paws on the ground, throw him a treat. Give him praise, but keep things low key. Too much excitement and attention from you may stimulate him enough to get him jump up again.

Practice Makes Perfect

It helps if you can set up the situation to practice with your dog.

For instance, if he jumps up a lot when you first walk through the door, spend a few minutes a few times a day coming and going. Don't make a big fuss over the dog, and be sure to step back outside if he jumps up. Reward him any time all four feet are on the floor.

Add a Sit Command

Once your dog is able to keep all four feet on the floor for a few seconds or more, start asking him to sit. Walk into a room or through the front door, and give the **command sit**. As soon as the dog sits, give him a treat. Practice this over several training sessions. With lots of practice, your dog will be sitting as soon as you walk through the door or enter the room.

Practice with Other People

It's not enough that you practice with your dog. You should also involve friends and family in this training. Otherwise, your dog may learn only that it's not okay to jump up on you.

Having other people help with this training will teach your dog to keep all four paws on the floor no matter who comes into the room.