

How to Stop Your Dog From Jumping Up on People

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Jumping up on people is a natural canine behavior. Dogs get to say hello face-to-face when they jump. Even better, it's guaranteed to get attention.

However, from a human point of view, jumping to greet is annoying and possibly dangerous. Clothes can get soiled by muddy paws and people, especially seniors and children, can be knocked over. It's more polite and far safer to teach your dog to greet people appropriately.

Why Dogs Greet by Jumping

Dogs repeat behaviors that earn them [rewards](#). And few things are more rewarding to your pet than your [attention](#). Similarly, other family members, visitors, and strangers can all reinforce the behavior too. Even negative reactions (like yelling at your dog or grabbing their paws) are still attention and can reinforce the behavior. For many dogs, pushing them away is simply part of a [wrestling game](#).

To eliminate jumping from your dog's greeting repertoire, you need to eliminate the associated rewards. That means managing your dog so they don't get the chance to practice jumping, as well as teaching them an alternative, more appropriate way to greet people.

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How to Train an Alternative Greeting Behavior

If you ignore your dog when they jump, theoretically their jumping behavior should eventually stop. After all, it's no longer being rewarded. However, every person you encounter in your home or on the street isn't going to know those rules. And even worse, that can be frustrating for your dog. They need to be taught what to do instead.

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How you want your dog to greet people is up to you. You might simply want all four paws on the floor, or you might want your dog to [sit or lie down](#). But remember, you need to tell them what **to** do, not just what **not** to do. For example, "sit" for greetings is an easier rule than "don't jump."

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How to Train “Four on the Floor”

You can teach your dog to keep all four paws on the floor when they greet people by placing [treats](#) on the floor during greetings. The idea is to prevent your dog from jumping by rewarding them before they can even think about leaving the ground. The following steps will teach “four on the floor”:

1. With your dog on leash, have somebody approach your dog.
2. Before the person gets to your dog, toss several treats on the floor.
3. While your dog is eating off the floor, have the person pet and greet them.
4. Before your dog is finished eating, have the person back away again.
5. After several repetitions, repeat the steps above. But this time, extend the greeting, continuing to toss treats on the floor the entire time.
6. Once your dog can keep all four feet on the ground, let them greet the person before you place the first treat on the ground.
7. As your dog begins to understand the rules, you can feed fewer and fewer treats until the greeting is the only reward.

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The trick to this technique is being fast with the treats. You need to anticipate your dog’s jumping behavior and provide the goodies before it can occur. If you’re too late and the dog jumps, have the person turn and walk away as you stop feeding the dog. In time, your dog will come to realize that having four paws on the floor brings attention and treats, and jumping brings nothing.

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How to Train “Sit” For Greetings

Another appropriate greeting behavior is [sitting](#) for pets and hellos. Like the training method above, your dog will learn that when their butt is on the floor, attention comes their way. But when they get up, the attention all stops. The following steps will teach sit for greetings:

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1. Tether your dog’s [leash](#) to a doorknob or piece of furniture.
2. From several feet away, ask your dog to sit. When they do, calmly approach. If they stand up, turn and walk back to your starting point and ask for the sit again. If they stay sitting, go up to them and quietly praise and pet them. If they stay sitting, keep greeting them. As soon as they stand up, turn and walk away.

3. As your dog begins to understand they need to sit to get your greeting, you can make your approaches more and more exciting.
4. Once your dog has mastered sitting for greetings with you, go back to step one with friends and family members.

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Remember, the more your dog practices sitting, the easier this exercise will be for them. There's no point in teaching sit for greetings if your dog is still struggling to sit without [distractions](#). Sitting should be your dog's way of saying "please." Having them sit before going outside, getting their dinner, and so on makes sitting for greetings easier to train.

How to Prevent Jumping While You Train

While you're teaching your dog an appropriate greeting behavior, you need to manage their behavior so they don't get the chance to practice jumping. For example, if your dog has a strong "[go to your place](#)" cue, you can send your dog to their [mat](#) or [crate](#) anytime the doorbell rings. Alternatively, you can place a [baby gate](#) at your entranceway so your dog can't get to visitors. Putting your dog on leash whenever guests arrive can also help you prevent jumping.

Another management trick is keeping [toys](#) and [treats](#) at the front door. You can throw the reward away from the doorway to occupy your dog's time while your visitor enters. Or your guest can use the treat or toy to reward your dog for greeting them appropriately.

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It can be particularly hard to prevent jumping when you're walking your dog. You can't expect strangers to know or abide by your rules. Until your dog understands appropriate greetings with friends and family, try to avoid having them greet strangers. Instead, get your dog's attention with a "[watch me](#)" cue or by [squeaking a toy](#) and letting the stranger walk past.

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When your dog is ready to try greeting people on the street, be sure to tell people the procedure. Ask them to ignore your dog if your dog doesn't follow the rules. Soon, your dog will understand how to say hello politely, whether at your front door or out on the sidewalk.

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