

How to Stop Your Dog From Jumping Up on People

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The Spruce / Kevin Norris

Jumping up is a [common behavior problem](#) among dogs. You may be annoyed by your excited, overly exuberant dog jumping to greet you the minute you step through the front door. But it can actually be dangerous for small children, people who have physical disabilities, older people, and people who are fearful of dogs.

Most of the time, jumping only indicates that your dog is seeking attention. The good news is that you can train your dog to stop jumping on people and start greeting everyone more politely.

Why Do Dogs Jump Up?

There are a number of theories about [why dogs jump up on people](#); popular among these are dominance theories or concepts based on greeting behaviors between dogs, many of which are not based on scientific research.¹ The truth is, though, that your dog is probably jumping up to say, "Look at me!"

You might inadvertently be rewarding your dog for jumping up on you by giving it what it wants; your attention. Even negative attention may be better than no attention to some dogs so if you are yelling or reacting in a dramatic way when your dog jumps, this can still reinforce the behavior. Your dog doesn't necessarily realize that when you [push it off](#) or yell at it to get down that you're attempting to discourage it. Instead, your pup may view your behavior as exactly what it's seeking: treasured attention from you.

In this case, any type of attention that the dog gets from you or others may be perceived as a reward. It makes sense then that if you want to teach your dog not to jump, it will need to be rewarded for keeping all four paws on the ground, instead of jumping up. Here are some strategies to do that.

How to Stop the Jumping Up

Training your dog not to jump up on people takes patience and persistence on your part. Be aware that there are actions that you should take and others that you should avoid. Be consistent when you're training your dog, and you'll be rewarded with a best friend who keeps its front paws to itself.

Withhold Attention

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

- As soon as your dog jumps up, turn your back. Cross your arms over your chest and don't make a sound. If the dog runs around to jump up again, turn the other way. Wait for the dog to stop jumping before you greet it or give it any attention.
- 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 it jumps up when you're inside, walk out of the room. Wait a moment; then step back inside. Repeat this until your dog calms down.

Reward Good Behavior

When you're working on preventing unwanted jumping, it can really help to keep some [treats](#) close at hand. As soon as your dog is standing in front of you with all four paws on the ground, toss it a treat. Praise your dog as well, but keep things low-key. [Too much excitement](#) or high-pitched squeals from you may stimulate another round of jumping. Try to project a calm, quiet, presence.

Practice Makes Perfect

It helps if you can set up situations to practice with your dog. For instance, if the jumping occurs most often when you come home after work, spend a few minutes several times a day coming and going. Don't make a big fuss over your dog and step back outside if it jumps up. Offer a reward anytime all four feet are simultaneously on the floor.

Add a Sit Command

Once your dog is able to keep four paws on the floor for a few seconds or more, start asking it to sit. Walk into a room or through the front door and give the [command "sit."](#) As soon as the dog sits, offer a treat. Practice this over several training sessions. With plenty of repetitions, your dog will start 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 that it's not OK to jump up on you but everyone else is fair game. Having other people help with this training teaches your dog to keep all four paws down no matter who comes into the room.

What Not to Do

You may have heard about methods of training a dog not to jump that call for physical punishment or [aversive](#). One such method is a knee to the dog's chest. Another is using leash correction—pulling or yanking on the leash—to get the dog off you. There are several problems with these methods:

- If you knee or leash correct your dog too harshly or improperly, you can seriously injure the dog.
- When you use a knee to the chest, you may knock your dog down, but the dog may interpret this as your way of initiating play. Your dog's response may be to jump up again to continue the game because you've actually reinforced the behavior you're trying to stop.
- Your dog may learn not to jump up only when it's on a leash. Since most dogs aren't leashed 24/7, chances are your dog will have plenty of opportunities to get away with jumping up when it's off its leash.
- Techniques that involve painful or scary stimuli induce [fear in dogs](#) and erode the trust between dogs and their humans. This can affect your dogs' behavior in many other ways and lead to more serious problems including aggression and phobias.

If you suspect your pet is sick, call your vet immediately. For health-related questions, always consult your veterinarian, as they have examined your pet, know the pet's health history, and can make the best recommendations for your pet.