

Help - my dog jumps up!

Most dogs jump up for one simple reason – to get our attention! Your dog is likely to jump up when they are excited to see you and want you to interact with them.



Dogs do whatever works out well for them, so if you reward your dog with attention whenever they jump up they'll just keep doing it! We often encourage jumping up in puppies when they're small and cute, but this can make things very confusing for them when they grow up and we no longer want them to behave like this.

Because dogs enjoy our attention so much, they might even find it rewarding when we try to discourage them from jumping up. They might not care that you're telling them "you're a bad dog and you mustn't jump up" – they can't speak English after all – because all they're thinking is 'I jumped up and you looked at me, you spoke to me and you touched me, so I'm gonna jump up again cos that was good for me!'

For some dogs though, telling them off for jumping up could be seen as scary and distressing. They might become anxious or confused about your relationship with them, as sometimes you might be more than happy to give them a fuss, but at times like these after they've jumped up you now appear agitated and cross. This confusion could actually cause them to jump up even more because they anxiously want to connect with you and make things feel better!



Teaching your dog not to jump up

Your dog will need to learn that it is now **keeping all four paws on the floor** that gains them all your attention and praise, and that jumping up at you just doesn't gain them anything at all!

There are **two simple steps** to teaching your dog not to jump up:

- Step 1.** Reward your dog when all four paws are on the floor with praise/attention!
- Step 2.** Ignore your dog if they jump up – don't react at all!

*** Be prepared that things might get a little worse just before they get a lot better!**

When you start to ignore your dog for jumping up, you might find that they appear confused, especially if previously this behaviour would have resulted in you looking at them, touching them and speaking to them, regardless of whatever you might be saying! A dog might try even harder to get the response they

are expecting – so you might initially see your dog jumping up with more intensity, determined to get you to react. **Don't worry – this is part of the learning process!** This might well be a frustrating time for you but, being consistent and no longer giving them any attention will mean that over time and repetition your dog is learning that there is just no point doing this behaviour – but that keeping all four paws on the floor does get your attention, so they can do that instead because you'll always reward that!

Teach your dog to do something else instead!

We usually say “hallo” or “hi, how are you?” when we greet each other, and our clever dogs very quickly learn that these words mean we're about to interact with new people and that these people might also be ready to give them a fuss or a biscuit too! So just hearing the words, and seeing someone approaching, can make our dogs suddenly become very excited because they're expecting a fun interaction with someone!

It can be very hard for dogs to learn to control themselves, especially when they're very excited, so giving them something specific to do and rewarding them for doing it can be a useful way to help them out when they're meeting people!

Teach your dog to meet people by sitting and waiting for attention – this is just taking keeping all four paws on the floor a little further!

Take some tasty treats and start practising in a place where not much else is happening, so it's easy for your dog to concentrate.

- ✿ With your dog on-lead and walking along next to you, simply stop walking, say “hallo” out loud - to no-one at all! – and use the treat to lure your dog into a sitting position next to you. Our leaflet **Dog Training Made Easy** gives full instructions! Once they're sitting, give them the treat and praise them!
- ✿ Walk along again and repeat this! Stop, say “hallo” and lure your dog into a sitting position with the treat and then reward them. Repeat this several times until your dog starts to sit as soon as you stop and say “hallo” – this shows that they understand that when you do this the quicker they sit the quicker they will get their treat!
- ✿ After a little practice, you should now be able to keep the treat out of sight – in your pocket or treat pouch – and no longer need to lure your dog into a sitting position when you stop and say “hallo”, but just produce the reward once they have sat down!
- ✿ Now you can start to build in distractions and practice in a slightly busier environment. Your dog might find this harder, so you might want to use an even tastier treat to reward their efforts! You might need to go back to luring them if they do find this stage difficult – that's not a problem, just use the treat

until your dog understands and then progress to it being out of sight again. Going at your dog's pace will give them confidence!

- ✿ Once your dog will quickly sit whenever you stop and say "hallo", regardless of what else is happening around you, you can progress to actually meeting someone! Ask a friend or relative to help you by walking towards you and your dog so that when you get close to them you can simply stop and reward your dog for sitting as you say "hallo". Have a very special treat ready to reward this because it is really hard for your dog!
- ✿ Once your dog is sitting with the new person in front of you both, you can continue to give them treats to keep them sitting, and then as a bonus reward for sitting with all four paws on the floor – as long as you and the other person are both comfortable with doing so - you can allow the person to give your dog a treat for sitting still and then say hallo and give them a fuss if they wish to... and if your dog also wishes too of course!
- ✿ As long as all four paws remain on the floor then your dog can continue to be rewarded! If they suddenly become excited because the interaction is such fun for them then just ignore them. Nagging them to sit back down at this point won't work because they're too excited, so just wait calmly for them to realise this behaviour gets them no attention at all then reward again once they have all four paws on the floor!
- ✿ Now you can start to practice in different environments, so that your dog learns to do this wherever they might be! Ultimately, you should aim to practice this when you greet visitors at your front door and bring them inside your home! **If your dog struggles with staying calm when you have guests our leaflet 'Visitor Training' gives you lots of tips on how to help them!**

Consistency and Timing – the Two Golden Rules of Training!

✿ *Consistency*

If you're consistent your dog will quickly learn what works to get your attention and what doesn't. Without consistency your dog may get confused and try everything to see what behaviour works best to get your attention! **Make sure all your family and friends are on board** with training and coach any visitors who may interact with your dog before they arrive!

✿ *Timing*

Timing your rewards, in this case your attention, will make the difference between your dog learning two different things, to jump up or not to jump up.

Make sure you act quickly and **reward your dog only when all four feet are on the ground**. You might feel like a Yo-Yo to begin with, but if you're consistent it won't take long for your dog to learn.

Most dogs jump up simply because they are happy to see people and want to say hello, however your dog may also jump up to ask for your attention if they are feeling worried about something!

If you think your dog is jumping up to get your attention because they are feeling scared - for example due to a dog or person approaching or being in a busy environment - it is best to reassure them and calmly move them away from the scary situation! Your dog might benefit from building up confidence in different situations.

These resources have been created by Dogs Trust using the most up-to-date scientific-based understanding of dog behaviour and welfare needs and can be freely downloaded by anyone interested in learning more about understanding dog behaviour and training dogs.