

A SOUND & BEGINNING

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Ding-Dong! Polite Greetings at the Front Door **“Some problems you just can’t turn your back on!”**

Lots of dogs jump up. It’s one of their most common and annoying behaviors. But why do dogs jump up? They do so to greet people, plus they want to get close to your face, and because it is very rewarding to them. Pushing a dog away with your hands never seems to work. To the dog, you are signaling a request to play and causing the dog to be more excited...but it never translates to your dog to “Go away”.

Most of the time we touch our dogs, and we may even pet them or hug them when they jump up. BUT when they run up to us with muddy paws, we sometimes yell at them. Yelling is attention, and to a dog, any attention is better than no attention at all. Besides, half the time you’re in a good mood so in your dog’s mind, it’s probably worth a try!

Traditional methods for teaching a dog not to jump up include kneeling them in the chest, stepping on their hind paws, hitting them on top of the head, or holding their paws until they struggle to get away. But some dogs may think a knee in the chest is an invitation to play! Hitting a dog on the head may make the dog hand shy and stepping on the feet may cause injury. The paw---holding technique teaches the dog to be afraid of our hands or of being touched. Would you want your dog to be afraid of your touch? I don’t think so.

Instead you need to teach your dog by rewarding the GOOD behavior and by ignoring and not reinforcing the BAD or undesirable behavior.

While you are training your dog how to be polite when greeting guests into your home, you’ve got to have a plan to manage the entrance so your dog doesn’t have the ability to jump on people. Each time you allow your dog to jump on someone means that your dog is practicing that behavior and is getting better at it! Since we want your dog to get better at keeping their paws on the floor, we need to manage the initial greetings while we continue to practice and train the behavior that we want from our dogs, which is to GREET POLITELY.

There are several ways to both train AND manage GREETINGS. Here are some helpful tips to get you started.

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ENTRY TRAINING WITH YOUR DOG ON A LEASH

1. Put your dog on a leash before guests arrive so your dog is tethered to you. (Just like you would if you were taking your dog out for a walk)
2. Keep the leash short but loose. Short enough so your dog cannot make contact with the visitor but long enough so your dog can move a bit and not feel trapped.
3. Let your dog do whatever your dog wants to do while you remain calm and prevent your dog from jumping on that person.
4. When your dog does something desirable, you would immediately reward the good behavior.
5. Repeat, repeat, and repeat.
6. After much practice at this, you can begin to have your visitor reward your dog.

What you are doing is CAPTURING the behavior you want your dog to do. So each time your dog has four feet on the floor you would praise and encourage and reward.

What your dog learns is that the polite behavior is more rewarding than the jumping. Management while training DOES work beautifully together.

PLEASE NOTE: Some things you do NOT want to do are:

1. Do NOT tether your dog to a solid non---moveable object such as a table leg or doorknob, as this can create more frustration and is not as effective as tethering the dog to you.
2. Do NOT reward any *aggressive** display. If your dog is lunging and trying to grab onto your clothing, or barking a lot, it means that you are too close to whatever it is your dog wants. So get farther away, do some obedience exercises, and then begin the “four on the floor” training, but now you’ve gotten a bit farther away so your dog can be calmer and be able to practice the polite behavior you are looking for.
3. Do NOT react if your dog jumps up on YOU while on leash. If you yell or try to correct, it would only be seen as reinforcing for your dog. If your dog jumps on you, immediately fold your arms in tight at your waist, and turn/look away. Make NO eye contact and do not speak. The moment your dog has “four on the floor” you would praise and reward. Remember ANY attention that you give your dog, will be *heard* and *learned* by your dog as; “Atta boy! Or Good Girl!” By you remaining calm and consistent, and rewarding the paws on the floor and not on you, you will be helping your dog learn polite greetings!

Ding-Dong! Polite Greetings at the Front Door

ENTRY TRAINING WITH YOUR DOG BEHIND A GATE

1. Secure your dog behind a gate that is visible to the door.
2. Same steps as training on leash, you would reward for behaviors that you like, and you would ignore behaviors you don't want to be repeated.
3. Practice this a lot and eventually you will have your visitor get closer to the gate to reward and pet your dog. In the beginning you will be rewarding just for your dog not jumping on the gate. Then you will begin to strengthen good behavior by asking for a sit before rewarding. Practicing this will get your dog to realize that the only way they get attention is by offering good behaviors such as all four feet on the ground, no barking, and/or sitting politely.

ENTRY TRAINING WITH YOUR DOG OUT OF SIGHT UNTIL GUESTS ENTER

1. Dog is crated or put away in another room in the house while you let your visitor into the home.
2. Have your guest sit at the kitchen table with their legs under the table.
3. Let your dog into the room and reward your dog for not jumping up.
4. Have your guest reward your dog for polite behavior.

This method allows your guest to prevent the jumping up while being able to reward your dog for NOT jumping.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR DOG ENTERED THE ROOM AND DID JUMP UP?

This is where you calmly remove** your dog from the area. Have your dog do some obedience exercises and reward those behaviors of sit, down, etc. and then return and let your dog try to greet without jumping. If your dog again jumps up, you repeat and try again until your dog is able to be successful and learn.

This is to teach your dog that the behavior they're doing, you do not like, and it helps to settle your dog's behavior so they can become calmer and look forward to greeting your guests. At this point, your dog is being rewarded with greeting your guests by earning the privilege because of their performing those cued obedience exercises you asked for.

***Have your dog on a very short leash called a "tab". It's about 6--12" long and it just allows you to be able to guide your dog out of the room without having to try to grab at their collar. If need be, you can always leave your dog on a light--line which is just a very thin form of a leash but can be left to drag behind the dog, making it easier for you to grab onto in order to re--direct out of the room.*

Ding-Dong! Polite Greetings at the Front Door

Sometimes after people have been in the house for some time, and your dog has had a chance to listen to their voices and the initial human greetings have been completed, then it's easier for your dog to become calm and offer polite behaviors.

THE DOORWAY is a very charged up place and always full of excitement. Your job is to manage that excitement while training your dog.

Here are some EASY MANAGEMENT TRAINING TIPS (Not to be used on dogs displaying any type of aggression*)

1. Have a box of dog toys outside your front door and instruct your visitor to enter the home, dog toy first. 😊 This is a great way to manage polite behaviors with dogs that like to hold things in their mouths. It gives them a job to do and for some reason, dogs don't readily jump up while holding an object in their mouths. Usually they walk around proudly displaying their grand prize.
2. Place small bags or containers of treats outside the front door. Instruct your guest to enter the home and before they even get their feet into the entryway, have them empty and scatter the treats all over the floor. Then while the dog is happily seeking out all the yummy treats, your guest can enter your home and go sit at the table. The table allows a way to manage the dog from jumping until your dog is trained enough to offer a polite SIT instead of trying to bother your guest. HOWEVER, if your dog eats a treat, jumps up, then eats another treat, we don't advise using this management tip because you have no control of what IS being rewarded.

WARNING: These management tips would not be advisable for dogs that are resource guarders, or dogs in multi-dog homes that have issues over sharing food or toys, or may fight with each other because of the excitement at the door.

These management tips would not be advisable for dogs that are growling or barking – this is just to manage the overly friendly dog that wants to jump up and say hi.

***Aggression is defined as barking, growling, and/or biting.**

Remember that all your dog wants to do is to be part of the family. Your taking the time to train them allows them that luxury.

It's up to you to train your dog. Your dog can't magically learn without your help. In the beginning you are doing both management AND training, with the eventual goal of having your wonderful dog be able to say hi to your guests and to wait politely for petting....with Four on the Floor!

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Finally the ultimate goal would be to train for what happens when the doorbell rings or someone knocks on your door. You need to set a realistic goal.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT YOUR DOG TO DO?

Having a dog and barking at the ringing doorbell is very desirable for some people. You just want to be able to have your dog pay attention to you when you ask your dog to stop barking and to allow your guests into the home without them being jumped on.

You must first decide what behavior you want from your dog. Do you want your dog to SIT? Do you want your dog to go to a certain place, such as a mat, and wait there until released? Do you want your dog to say hi while wiggling all around, but just NOT jumping up? YOU decide and then YOU must be consistent in your criteria.

Doing this will help your dog learn and will make your dog a responsible member of your family that you can be proud of, and will keep grandma safe from harm.

When training your dog, always stay calm and focused and be consistent on what you want your dog to do. Reward the good behavior and do not “feed” the undesirable behaviors and before you know it, people will be commenting on what a wonderful dog you have. And you do!

You just need to take some time to practice these training and management tips so your dog understands and learns what it is you want them to do.

Now go have some fun with your dog!

NOTE: If your dog has ever made contact with you or anyone in an attempt to bite or actually did bite, please seek a qualified professional through any of the following.

- Chicagoland Veterinary Behavior Consultants
www.chicagovetbehavior.com
- Dr Sara Bennett VCA Berwyn Animal Hospital
<http://www.vcaspecialtyvets.com/berwyn>
- Contact a veterinarian in your area who is board certified in behavior
<http://www.dacvb.org/about/member-directory/>
- “A Sound Beginning” behavioral trainer
asoundbeginningprogram.com

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