



Jumping Up On People

When dogs are puppies jumping up is often seen as a cute habit. However, as the dog gets older it then becomes an annoying habit and sometimes dangerous.

Why should I stop my dog jumping up?

- It can be dangerous. If you have a large or heavy breed your dog may knock someone over. Even smaller breeds can be heavy if they run and jump. Any sized dog could knock over or injure a small child or elderly person. Plus what if your dog jumps up when you or a visitor is drinking a hot drink?
- It can be frightening. It is important to remember that not everyone is a dog lover. Plus not everyone wants to greet your dog, no matter how cute you think they are! Also a dog may jump at a child and frighten them.
- Annoying. Not all your visitors want to be jumped on, especially the man who's come to read the meter! Plus some people may not appreciate your mud covered or wet pawed dog jumping up to say hello!

How do I stop my dog jumping up?

Start as early as possible with your dog. The longer they are allowed to jump up the more of an established habit it will become. It is possible to retrain older dogs but it takes longer to break old habits.

Jumping up is a very common problem, which is very rewarding for the dog as it is a very useful way of gaining people's attention. It is vital that your dog is never rewarded with attention whenever, they jump up.

Whenever your dog jumps up at you withdraw all attention. Attention is the reward for this behaviour so if the dog continues to get his/her reward they will continue to jump up. When you ignore your dog, turn your body away from them, don't even make eye contact and don't say anything. Make it clear that when s/he jumps up they will get nothing from you. When your dog settles down and stops jumping, you then initiate contact. Praise him calmly so as not to over excite him. Don't give any commands, let your dog work it out themselves, and praise them when they get the right behaviour. Vary your reward, e.g. sometimes verbal praise, a cuddle, toy or tit-bit. This keeps your dog motivated and also stops them always expecting a food reward.

Consistency is the key. Make it easy for your dog to understand and eliminate any confusion. Everybody who comes into contact with your dog has to reinforce the same message. It is unfair to reward your dog with attention and cuddles when he jumps up on you, but then get cross with him when he jumps up at an elderly relative.

Try to preempt situations that your dog will jump up and help them succeed. If your dog looks as if they are about to launch themselves at you, don't wait for him/her to jump but withdraw your attention before they jump, by turning away from them. If there are situations that cause your dog to get excited and prone to jumping up, e.g. stopping to chat to somebody in the street, or opening the front door, give him an alternative behavior, e.g. sitting. Then praise your dog for this behavior. You can also help reinforce this when playing with your dog. If they jump up when you are playing, stop the game. Soon your dog will realize that the fun stops if they jump up. Teach your dog that they have to sit or down to have their toy thrown so they can run after it. This not only rewards calm behavior, but makes play much safer. Imagine if a child picks up one of your dog's toys. It is much safer for your dog to go and sit in front of the child hoping that they will throw it for them, rather than jumping up and trying to grab it from them with their teeth.

The Doggy Centre Advice: Jumping Up



Punishment

Withdrawal of attention and stopping fun with your dog is punishment enough and does not damage your relationship with your dog; in fact it makes them even keener to be with you. Remember that if correcting your dog it must be immediately and followed up with praise the second they get it right, this eliminates confusion.

Hitting, pinch collars, choke chains etc are totally unnecessary. Yes these will stop your dog jumping up because they will condition your dog so that it associates pain with jumping up. However, they will also damage your relationship with your dog. All dogs have different personalities and will react differently to this type of handling. Some will be aggressive back, others will become hand shy or nervous. Fearful or anxious dogs often develop behavior problems, such as phobias and separation anxiety. It is important that dogs build up a trusting relationship with their human pack members. Domestic dogs do not fully understand the human world they live in and need to trust someone who does. They need to believe that you will look after them.

There will be times that you will put your dogs in situations where they need to trust you, perhaps you will need to sit in a vet's waiting room with an unsocialised dog, or a large lorry passes close to you or a dog on the other side of the road is growling at them, they need to believe that you will not put them in situations that will hurt them. You do not want your dog to associate pain with you.

There have been many times that my dogs have put complete faith in me on the vet's table. Including when one of my dog's had an emergency procedure which involved him having his skin stapled together with no anesthetic by complete strangers in the absence of his owners. I have no doubt that this hurt and probably frightened him but he allowed it to be done because he trusts humans, and still wagged his tail when he saw them on his follow up vet visits. In short his trust in humans saved his life.

My personal opinion is that if I put a choke chain or electric shock collar on my children I would be reported to social services. In my opinion it is just as cruel for dogs.