

How do I stop my dog from jumping?

Most dogs love to jump. Some love to jump more than others and this can be difficult if they are jumping to greet people. While we as humans know that this is inappropriate, in the dog world this is perfectly acceptable and polite. It is our job to teach our dogs how to politely greet humans, and it's not always an easy job, but it can be done if you are consistent.

The quick fix for this situation would be to always have irresistible treats near the door. When someone walks in the door, throw a handful of treats on the ground and greet the dog while she is still occupied. Chances are that she'll be too distracted by the treats to put all of her energy into jumping on you. If this method is effective for you, you can consider your problem managed and leave it at that. However, if you don't have treats handy, or your dog is more interested in jumping than eating, then you'll need to go to plan B. Plan B involves actually giving your dog something to do that doesn't involve jumping.

There are several ways to teach a dog not to jump that don't ever involve putting a hand on the dog. This makes it much more effective for people who don't have the strength, or in some cases courage, to physically get a dog on all fours. Since every dog learns a little differently, I'll mention several techniques.

The first technique involves teaching the dog that sitting nicely is preferable to jumping. Wear some old clothes, stretch out your muscles, and prepare to do the "no jump dance" with your dog. Greet the dog very calmly. When she prepares to jump up, turn your back, completely ignoring her. Watch out of the corner of your eye and as soon as the dog has all four paws on the ground, turn to calmly pet her. If/when she jumps again, turn your back again. You want the dog to learn that jumping gets her ignored, but keeping all four feet on the floor gets the attention that she craves. Some dogs are so excited about jumping that it will take several twists and turns on your part before she gets the idea – that's where the "dance" comes in.

Once your dog has the idea that jumping isn't such a great idea, take the training a step farther. Make your dog hold a sit before you will pet her. If she gets up you completely ignore her, when she sits down, you give her attention again. If you are really feeling cute, you can teach the dog to offer a paw for greeting. Not only will this amaze people, but it's one more thing for the dog to think about instead of jumping.

Another technique to try involves teaching your dog what position you want her to be in when she greets people. This is somewhat similar to the first exercise where you are teaching the dog to sit and you can use these two exercises together. When you have the time, let the dog jump on you. Ignore her as you did in the first technique. As soon as she gives up and her paws hit the floor, say "off", "down", "floor", "knock it off", whatever **consistent** command you want to use to let the dog know that she has to have four paws on the floor. **DO NOT** give the command when the dog is on you!!!! If you do that, the dog makes the association between the command and jumping, so every time

she hears the word she'll remember that she heard it when she was jumping and she'll probably jump again. You want to name the action that she's doing correctly so wait until she has her paws on the ground.

You can also try really tempting your dog to jump and rewarding her for staying on the ground. Hold treats in your hands and your hands up near your shoulders or face. This will really excite the dog – not only does she want to greet you face to face but now there's FOOD involved! Again, ignore the jumping. As soon as the dog puts paws on the ground (or ideally sits), give the dog both the treats and the attention she wants. This makes staying on the ground doubly rewarding for your dog.

A fourth technique to consider takes the dog away from the door all together. The goal is to teach the dog that when someone comes to the door, the dog won't get any attention until she is in her designated spot. This is a multi-step process, but it's very handy not just for greetings, but to give the dog a spot of her own to go to when you need her to. The first thing you need to do is pick the spot. Put a blanket or bed there, along with toys. Spend time with your dog in her special spot, giving her attention and treats. When your dog loves this place, start sending her to it. Start from just a step or two away. Point to the place and give it a consistent name – “bed”, “place”, “mat”, “corner”, anything you'd like. Eventually the dog will head over to her place. As soon as she touches it, give her lots of praise and treats. Gradually send the dog to her place from farther and farther away. During this entire time, don't greet your dog until she is on or near her place. Soon this reinforcement, combined with the command, should help the dog to learn that greetings come from one place and one place only, so she should get used to being there and waiting for the attention. Dogs that need a little extra reminder can be tethered to the spot using a leash or tie-out line attached to a stationary object, door, or an eyebolt fastened to the wall. This is not for leaving the dog unattended!!! It is only to help her stay in one place until she learns to stay there on her own.

Along the same line as teaching the dog to go to a place would be teaching the dog to go to get a toy for greeting. This is particularly easy for the natural retrievers. First teach the dog to get a toy when there are no distractions around. Once the dog is able to do this on cue, send the dog to get a toy as soon as you walk in the door. (Leaving toys near the door will make life easier on you and the dog.) The act of running for a toy will use up some of the excited energy and many dogs seem less likely to jump on people if they have a toy in their mouth.

A tip for any of the methods you may choose: keep your greetings very low key. Even though you may have missed your dog as much as she missed you, try to be very boring in your greetings. You may want to go so far as to actually ignore the dog for several minutes. In my house my dogs know that I have to give my husband a kiss before I greet them and that usually involves me walking downstairs and past the dogs to get to my husband's office. My dogs get a calm verbal greeting and some absent pats, but nothing great until after I've seen my husband. This really takes the wildness out of my dogs' greetings.