

Preventing Jumping Up in Dogs

By Sherry Woodard

Most puppies are so cute (and so short) that we allow them to jump up on us. By the time they reach adulthood, however, jumping up to say hello is not so popular.

The best way to teach a dog to stop jumping up is to teach and practice proper greetings. Dogs can easily learn to sit every time they greet a person, even when they are very happy to see that person. When they are trained to associate meeting a person with a sit command and a treat, soon they will sit and wait for a treat without a command.

If you have more than one dog, practice with each dog alone. Teach your dog to sit in front of you for a small treat. Hold up the treat, say “sit,” and then offer the treat when the dog complies. Give the treat only if the dog’s bottom is on the floor. (Don’t reward for a half-sitting position.) Have your dog wait one second, then two, then three for the treat.



When your dog is consistently sitting for a treat, you can practice leaving and returning. Place a mat or dog bed inside the entryway of your house, where the dog will be situated when the door opens. (Since many entryways are tile or wood, a dog will be more willing to sit or lay on something more comfortable and less slippery.) Place a treat jar outside your door.

Go outside, pick up a treat and, as you enter, ask the dog to sit. Use your body to position the dog on the mat as you walk in. Do not give the treat or praise until the dog sits. You may need to be patient, since this is the greeting scenario that the dog has trouble with. Avoid using an angry tone if your dog doesn’t do what you want. Just say “sit” once and wait, holding the treat in front of you.

If you have practiced enough inside the house, your dog will eventually sit in the greeting situation. If she doesn’t, practice some more inside the house, and use higher-value treats. When she is consistently sitting for a treat, try the exit-and-entry routine again.

When your dog is greeting you with a good sit as you open the door, you can start adding a knock or ring of the doorbell. When she is doing well with that, practice with friends. Have friends come to the door, knock and ask for a sit as they enter. Soon you will have proper greetings every time. A treat jar may be needed for a while, but eventually you can move to praise alone.

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See also: Positive Reinforcement: Training with Praise and Rewards