

My dog runs at the door and jumps on people who enter my home. What can I do?

Dogs can be very excited when you return home or you have guests over and jumping up is one way dog's can interact with someone when they are excited. Jumping up may have been reinforced when your dog was a puppy and is a continued human taught behaviour, any attention that is rewarded for jumping such as punishment based such as pushing them down, telling them no is still reinforcing attention and therefore does not discourage jumping.

To change your dog's behaviour think of what you would like your dog to instead and teach them this. A sit is a great alternative to jumping up. Start by teaching your dog to sit every time he approaches you for a high value food reward and your attention. Gradually phase out food treats when the behaviour is 95% learned and can be reliably repeated.

Next practice with family members entering the home. Provide them with treats before they come in, either leave them accessible outside the door or have a container at the front door readily available. When they enter have them ask your dog for a sit either hand signal or verbal. (Hand signal is an easier form of communication for your dog when they are excited) When your dog sits for them have your family members reward with treats and attention. If your dog jumps up have your family member leave out the door, wait 3-5 seconds and try again until your dog sits for attention and rewards. Removing the reinforcer (person and attention) will help your dog realize jumping makes it go away.

Finally, when your dog is reliable with sitting with people he knows, practice with visitors using the same set up, you can also have your dog on a leash when practicing.