



CONTROLLING JUMPING

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

This is a behaviour that causes problems for owners is their dog jumping on people. Door charging is when the dog speeds to the door whenever anyone knocks or rings the bell. To deal with this problem, start by teaching the dog to sit and stay for a food reward in the entry area. Gradually phase out food treats when the behaviour is learned and can be reliably repeated. Next, you may need to practice with family members entering the home. Finally, when the dog has mastered the task with people he knows, practice with visitors, keeping the dog on a leash and making him sit and stay. A double-ended leash and step-in harness (these items are available at the Calgary Humane Society store) are excellent ways to control the dog and train him not to chase or jump up when people come to the door. Always require your dog to sit before getting petted and you can go a long way to eliminating jumping behaviour.

How can I prevent my dog from jumping up on others and me?

Usually, the motivation for the jumping-up behaviour is to greet people and get attention. Dogs are very excited when you return home, or when you have guests over, and jumping up is one way a dog can interact with someone when they are excited. Jumping up may have been reinforced when your dog was a puppy but jumping from an adult dog is rarely tolerated. The modification must not be directed at punishing the problem, but rather finding a means of teaching the dog an appropriate greeting posture. This usually is a sit/stay, which can then be rewarded with food and attention. Once the dog has perfected this without people present and practiced it with family members, the dog is ready to try with visitors. Make the dog sit and stay while people come and hand the dog a treat. If the dog gets up, then put him back in the sit and try again, visitors can leave and reenter. Often placing a "treat jar" by the front door with a bell on it will help. Once the dog associates the bell on the jar with a treat, and a treat with a sit/stay, the dog will be more likely to perform the task.

Another way to train this behaviour is to set up visitors to come to your home. Have the first person come to the door and instruct your dog to sit and stay. Then, let them in. Hopefully, with some effort, you will get your dog to continue to sit. Have the person enter, and with a treat in hand, have the dog sit down. After 5 minutes, have the person leave out the back door, come to the front and enter again. This second entry should go easier as your dog will have just seen the person. Repeat this 4-10 times for each visitor, the dog will have plenty of opportunity to learn the new task. Start this exercise with your dog on a leash so that they do not get a chance to jump up on your visitors. If your dog can maintain a sit/stay, they can't jump and sit at the same time. You want to teach your dog what to do to be successful and



create a positive association with sitting when there are visitors, essentially when your dog greets visitors by sitting, they get a tasty snack(s).

Once you have trained a new task, such as sitting politely for a greeting, you need to be sure you have identified all the reinforcement for the behaviour. If the dog succeeds in getting any attention for the jumping behaviour, then your dog will continue to jump. Attention may be petting or pushing away (which resembles play behaviour), and even mild reprimands can be reinforcing for a dog that really wants attention. To change this behaviour you need to remove ALL reinforcement. This may mean that you do not look, speak, touch, or interact with your dog IN ANY WAY when he jumps on you. If your dog does jump up, you can body block him and move him back. With a body block, you should not physically be touching your dog just taking up the space between you and your dog by shuffling forward to get your dog to back away. You could try turning your back and walking away so that your dog does not get any attention from you. Also, try leaving the area and socially isolating your dog, come back in 30 seconds and ask for a "sit" and if your dog sits then give him lots of attention, if not leave again.

If your dog is overexcited when visitors come over, you can crate or tether your dog for the first 15 to 20 minutes. Essentially you are managing where your dog is so that he can't practice inappropriate behaviours. Another option is to have your dog on a leash and have a portion of the leash under your foot so that he can't jump up and greet your visitors. Remember to praise and treat a "sit" so that he can practice appropriate greeting behaviour.

Little dogs often will jump up, try to bend over, and extend the back of your hand to a small dog so that they do not have to jump on you to get attention and seek contact.

Some people like to allow the dog to jump up on them at certain times. You must never allow the dog to choose the time. Ideally, you should teach your dog to jump up on commands such as "give me a hug" or "come up here." This way, you have the behaviour under verbal control, and you decide when the dog will be allowed to jump up using both verbal and physical cues.

If you find you are struggling to help your dog using these tips you can always call our Help Line at 403-723-6019, book a consultation via our website at

<https://www.calgaryhumane.ca/services/pet-training/private-consultations/>

Or, register for one of our behaviour classes on our website at

<https://www.calgaryhumane.ca/services/pet-training/training-classes/#>