

Stop Jumping Up On Me!

By Laura Tyler

You've tried turning away only to have him jump up and scratch your back or pounce off of you, biting at your clothes or your hands. Have you been pro-active by NOT giving attention to jumping up? (Perhaps not) Remember the naughty third grader who disrupted class every single day? Attention is still attention.

You have yelled, stepped on toes, kneed him in the chest or pinched his paws. If you have not heard of these suggestions, good! They do not work!

This is one of the most annoying doggy behaviors! It ranks right up there with pulling on the leash. Here's a bit of help. It's really simple but it's not easy.

Step one: Have you decided what you'd rather have him do instead of jumping up? How about asking him to sit for all interactions? That's pretty simple right?

Step two: Now for the hard part; be consistent. Consistency is important in changing this jumping up behavior. *Definition of consistency: the ability to maintain a particular standard or repeat a particular task with minimal variation. Synonyms: reliability – uniformity – stability – regularity.*

Positively reinforce sitting every time it happens. Positive reinforcement is the use of something the dog likes in order to increase his good behavior. If asking your dog to sit brings out yummy treats and praise, the likelihood of sitting will be increased. Why use food? Food is a primary reinforcer for all living things. Using food gives us the ability to jump start a behavior without force or coercion. And by pairing our praise with the delivery of that yummy reinforcer, we increase the power of our praise.

Step three: Be proactive and ask for sit for all interactions with you and each member of your family must do the same.

Step four: do not make any assumptions that your dog remembers to do this. You'll need to plan to repeat this training over and over in all possible situations. Think about how long jumping up has served to gain attention. You must be willing to give the right behavior even more attention than you have given to the wrong behavior.

Step five: Catch him being right! And praise and reinforce that correct choice! But don't assume because he did it once the problem has been fixed. By positively reinforcing the correct behavior quickly and repeatedly it will begin to take hold.

Step six: When you have company over, put your dog on leash and make sure you have a pocket full of treats. Keep your dog on leash while your company comes in and gets settled. Keep your dog on leash and repeatedly practice sit as you move about the room. You will be able to tell when the initial excitement of company wears off and your dog's energy level begins to mellow. At that point you may allow him off leash.

Step seven: Make sure your company knows that you are working very hard to teach this behavior and they are not to undermine your training by allowing your dog to jump up. If that happens, put him back on leash and do not allow your company to interact with your dog.

There is no room for part time expectations. If you want to make this work then you'll have to put in consistent effort. Your commitment and time will be positively reinforced by your dog's good behavior.

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