

No Jumping / OFF

By Susan Carney

Dogs learn to jump when they realize that our eyes, face and hands (the things that give them the attention they want) are up high on our bodies and, because we encourage it (sometimes without realizing).

Generally, dogs do not use jumping during greeting rituals with other dogs. Most dogs will crouch, lower their heads and lick each other's lips to greet. Jumping is a learned response to dogs living with people and is easy to fix.

To train your dog not to jump you must start with a simple statement. From now on, your dog will get no attention if two feet are on you or in the air. Attention (greeting) will only come when all four feet are on the floor. Your dog craves you and to be greeted by you. You have all the power you need to make this work.

Do these exercises:

Sit for greeting – Put your dog on a leash and have a friend or family member hold it at the end. The person holding the leash must be as still as a dead tree. No moving, walking, talking or leaning forward. The other person should grab some treat (small bite size treats) and begin to approach your dog offering a greeting. Say, Hi, act excited and walk towards your dog. As soon as your dog jumps...turn your back and walk 2-3 steps away; far enough away so your dog's feet cannot make contact with your body. Keep an eye on your dog with your peripheral vision and as soon as the dogs feet hit the floor, turn back around and approach again, offering a fun loving greeting. If his/her feet come up turn away again.

Do this repeatedly until your dog sees that; feet up gets me nothing; feet on the floor gets you to come closer. The treat comes when the dog keeps his/her feet on the floor and you get to actually touch the dog and greet it. Thus, your dog learns that keeping the feet on the floor gets attention and jumping gets nothing.

When the dogs' feet stay on the floor, bend or kneel down and offer your greeting on their level and in the proper way.

Step on the leash – This is a great method to help your dog not to jump on other people. Either most people do not mind or they use their hands to pet and push the dog off them at the same time. This does not work because "touch" of any kind is rewarding to your dog.

The owners / walker should stepping on the leash so that your dog can sit comfortably and not actually jump (somewhere in the middle of the leash). Now you are in control of the situation. As the other person approaches, your dog will try to jump but soon learn that they cannot. As your dog jumps s/he will be jerked by the leash and quickly realize s/he cannot jump. Once the dog stops trying to jump, reach down and reward with a treat and praise. Ask the person approaching if they could wait until your dog stops trying to jump. Then they can pet your dog.

If each time your dogs feet are on the floor s/he gets the treat (and praise, or the greeting) the dog will very quickly realize that all four feet on the floor is better than jumping.



Wait for it, your dog will do quite a bit of bouncing up and down trying to jump up before they realized what's going on and if you say NO, NO, NO over and over again your really just add to the problem. So step on the leash – let the person approach – wait for your dog to try to jump and stop – then reward with love or treats (or better yet – both!)

The command “Off” comes when your dog is already not jumping or sitting and has learned that this is better. So say, "Off" when the behavior is happening...and say it once. Again, “Off, Off, Off, Off” is just annoying and gets you nowhere.

Tell people you are in training – Often strangers think it is cute when a puppy comes over and says, “Hi” by jumping up. Well, it is cute, until your dog is full grown and 75 pounds. Start right away by letting your young puppy know that jumping is not allowed and let others know you are training by telling them you are in training and asking them to wait to pet your pup until s/he sits. Step on the leash to help and be ready with rewards. Most people will understand.

Jumping on things

Any time your dog is on something...the couch, bed or feet up on the counter....Call out its name, show that you have a treat...and as your dog gets off or removes his/her feet from the door or bed say, ‘OFF’...then wait for the dog to come to you to get the treat.

During this exercise (command), your dog is coming toward you (to get the treat). But we are not teaching come...so to clear up confusion for the dog we need to use the command “Off” right away and avoid saying come. You are rewarding the feet being back on the floor and doing your training by showing your dog the first several times.

If your dog does not listen – keep the leash on in the house (when your home) then go over to it and grab the leash – do not grab the collar...touch is reward. Say OFF; give a tug and then again reward when your dog gets off. Yes, reward even though you did it for them. Dogs cannot speak and are the perfect examples of show vs. tell. Spend your time showing a dog what is required to build a good foundation. Once your dog starts to understand that good things happen when they listen and when you are near they will look to you more often and you can go to the next step.

The next step would be to still offer a treat but not go to your dog to give it. Let them com further and further across the room to you. After a few more attempts you can show the treat but put it away, say, “Off” and then get the treat back out and give it. Each attempt can progress closer and closer to you not having to give a reward but be careful not to progress too quickly.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

Remember that your dog is your friend, do not knee him in the chest, squeeze his front paws ‘until it hurts,’ or stepping on his back feet. By teaching him what is acceptable behavior and rewarding him for doing it, you have become a fair, respectful and responsible pet owner.

For more help with a jumping problem or other behavior problem please call us at 603-772-2921 Ext. 112

