



How do I stop my dog from jumping?

Most dogs love to jump, and this can be difficult if they jump to greet people. While humans know that this is inappropriate, the dogs think jumping is perfectly acceptable. It is our job to teach our dogs how to greet humans: it's not always an easy job, but it can be done if you are consistent.

The quick fix for this situation would be to always have irresistible treats near the door. When someone walks in the door, throw a handful of treats on the ground and greet the dog while she is still occupied. Chances are that she'll choose the treats instead of jumping on you. If this method is effective for you, you can consider your problem solved.

If you don't have treats handy, or your dog is more interested in jumping than eating, then try one of these approaches.

- 1.) Teach the dog that sitting nicely is preferable to jumping. Wear some old clothes, stretch out your muscles, and prepare to do the "no jump dance" with your dog. Greet the dog very calmly. When she prepares to jump up, turn your back, completely ignoring her. Watch out of the corner of your eye and as soon as the dog has all four paws on the ground, turn to calmly pet her. If/when she jumps again, turn your back again. You want the dog to learn that jumping gets her ignored but keeping all four feet on the floor gets the attention that she craves. Some dogs are so excited about jumping that it will take several twists and turns on your part before she gets the idea – that's where the "dance" comes in. Once your dog has the idea that jumping isn't such a great idea, take the training a step further. Require your dog to hold a sit before you will pet her. If she gets up, ignore her. When she sits down, you give her attention again.
- 2.) Teach your dog what position you want her to be in when she greets people. (This is similar to the first exercise where you teach the dog to sit and you can use these two exercises together.) Let the dog jump on you. Ignore her. As soon as she gives up and her paws hit the floor, say "off", "down", "floor" or whatever **consistent** command you prefer to tell the dog to have four paws on the floor. DO NOT give the command when the dog is on you!!!! Otherwise, the dog concludes that "off" or "floor" means "jump on me." You want to name the action that she's doing correctly so wait until she has her paws on the ground.
- 3.) Tempt your dog to jump and reward her for staying on the ground. Hold treats in your hands and your hands up near your shoulders or face. This will really excite the dog – not only does she want to greet you face to face but now there's FOOD involved! Again, ignore the jumping. As soon as the dog puts paws on the ground (or ideally sits), give the dog both the treats and the attention she wants. This makes staying on the ground doubly rewarding for your dog.
- 4.) Teach the dog that when someone comes to the door, the dog won't get any attention until she is in her designated spot. This is a multi-step process, but it's very handy not only for greetings, but for sending the dog a spot of her own when you need her to be out of the way. First pick the spot. Put a blanket or bed there, along with toys. Spend time with your dog in her special spot and give her attention and treats. When your dog loves this place, start sending her to it. Start from a step or two away. Point to the place and give it a consistent name – "bed", "place", "mat", "corner", anything you'd like. Eventually the dog will head over to her place. As soon as she touches it, give her lots of praise and treats. Gradually send the dog to her place from farther and farther away. During this entire time, don't greet your dog until she

is on or near her place. Soon this reinforcement, combined with the command, should help the dog to learn that greetings come from one place and one place only, so she should get used to being there and waiting for the attention. (Dogs that need a little extra reinforcement can be tethered to the spot using a leash or tie-out line attached to a stationary object, door, or an eyebolt fastened to the wall. This is not for leaving the dog unattended!!! It is only to help her stay in one place until she learns to stay there on her own.)

- 5.) Teach the dog to go to get a toy for greeting. This is particularly easy for the natural retrievers. First teach the dog to get a toy when there are no distractions around. Once the dog can do this on cue, send the dog to get a toy as soon as you walk in the door. (Leaving toys near the door will make life easier on you and the dog.) The act of running for a toy will use up some of the excited energy and many dogs seem less likely to jump on people if they have a toy in their mouth.

A tip for any of the methods you choose: keep your greetings very low key. Even though you may have missed your dog as much as she missed you, try to be very boring when you arrive at the door. You may want to ignore the dog for several minutes. Consider greeting a spouse or child before you greet your dog. This delay can take some wildness of the dogs greeting.