



HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

Behavior Modification Handout

Jumping Up: Control and Prevention

Overly aroused greeting behaviors are very common in puppies and juvenile dogs and this behavior can often follow them into adulthood if not corrected. It's cute when they are little puppies but when they grow up to become 60lb dogs the cuteness wears off and becomes bruises, scratches and ruined clothes from dirty paws. As owners we inadvertently encourage this behavior by occasionally allowing jumping up or reaching out to pet or even pushing our dogs away when they are jumping up. It is up to us to eliminate any reinforcement of this behavior in order to control and prevent it.

Starting Off on the Right Paw / Managing Your Environment

Setting ground rules early on will help to prevent problems later on. Jumping up is an attention seeking behavior. When a dog jumps up to greet you in most cases it is to solicit attention from you. If you respond by giving any attention then the dog has been rewarded and behaviors that are rewarded are more likely to happen again and again. Even by scolding your dog or pushing him away when he jumps up you are giving him attention. Try this instead; when your dog jumps up completely ignore him. Cross your arms over your chest and turn your back to your dog. If your dog continues to jump excitedly, walk away and turn your attention to something other than the dog. When your dog finally settles down and has four paws on the floor, acknowledge him with verbal praise and a small food treat. The reward should come right away so pay attention and wait for it, it will happen. Remember to keep the verbal praise low key so you don't return your pet to an excited state.

Training a non-compatible behavior is also a critical part of controlling and preventing jumping up. Think about what would you like your dog to do when greeting you, instead of jumping up. A good choice would be to have him sit politely while being greeted. Work on training a good reliable sit cue in addition to eliminating unintentional reinforcement (ignore the behavior you don't like and reward the behaviors you do like).

Making sure everyone in the family is on the same page is an important part of training. If Uncle Joe allows Buster to jump up on him, then training will inevitably break down and be unsuccessful and frustrating for you and your dog. Whenever your dog greets or interacts with anyone, even meeting someone at the park, enforce the no jumping up rule. One bad apple can ruin a whole day of good training.

If this behavior has been allowed in the past and left unattended, controlling it will take some time and patience. It may even get worse before it gets better. This is just part of the learning process. Don't give in and don't give up.

Tips and Hints

The most common mistake everyone makes in trying to control jumping up behavior is joining in on the game. Any form of attention will reinforce this behavior.

- Physical punishment is a form of attention. Hitting or stepping on you dog's back feet, kneeling him in the chest or just pushing him away will not be effective tools for eliminating this behavior.
- Punishment may also create fearful behaviors. Fearful behaviors will influence future training and make learning difficult for your pet.
- Your puppy may learn to be afraid of you.
- He may become defensive and develop aggressive behaviors.
- He could shy away from physical interactions with you, like not wanting to be petted.
- Always reward calm behavior in your pet.
- Be careful when using verbal praise. Keep it low key so you don't get your dog over excited.
- Remember this behavior is often a product of a very friendly and very happy dog. This is a good thing☺
- Increase your dog's exercise so he may burn off excess energy.
- Your dog will repeat behaviors that are rewarding and avoid behaviors that are not.