

Jumping up is a natural behaviour. It is not really a behaviour problem but a problem regarding greeting positions!

From your dog's point of view, he just wants to say hello and get some attention. For him jumping up to get close to your mouth (as he did as a puppy to elicit food from his mother) is a natural form of greeting in dog terms. He feels it is the right thing to do. From your point of view, you want to greet your dog, but jumping up, in human terms can be too intrusive.

Contact and attention

Remember, pushing him down with your hands, shouting, or even a knee in the chest is giving him exactly what he wants which is physical contact and attention. To do this each time he jumps will give him the message "I get some sort of reinforcement from my owner when I jump up". These days, the most up-to-date training advocates a "no attention" approach in which your dog only gets what he wants (contact and attention) when he is behaving as you would like him to behave i.e. he is not jumping up.

Consistent communication

To do this you need to give your dog clear communication signals and by being very consistent. Every time he jumps, fold your arms across your chest and turn your back on your dog. If he circles around to try and jump on you again, continue to turn away and ignore him. Don't give in even if he props himself up on your back. The message you need to give him is "you get nothing from me while you are jumping on me". As soon as your dog has four paws on the ground, give him all the attention he is craving and if he jumps again, stand up, fold your arms, turn around and ignore him. The more consistent you are with this "no attention" approach, the quicker your dog will start to respond correctly. If you react the same way every time he jumps, your dog will begin to discriminate between the "no contact" consequences of jumping and the attention he gets when he does not jump.

Variations

When you do this anti-jump approach, there are several options you can follow. If your dog knows the command "Sit", you can ask him to sit as he circles around you trying to jump. As soon as he sits, give him the attention he wants.

When your dog jumps up on you, before you turn your back you can give him what trainers call a "No Reward Marker" or "NRM". This is basically a sound. It can be anything short and sharp and said clearly, but NOT aggressively (for example, it could be "Ah, Ah" or "Too Bad"). What this sound does is mark the behaviour you don't want. You use it just before you turn your back on him.

Method

1. Dog jumps
2. You say "Ah, Ah", fold your arms and turn away
3. He jumps again
4. You repeat the NRM and turn away.

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Last updated CS Dec.2014

Once your timing with the NRM is quick enough, it is also useful to use this as a cut-off warning when you see your dog about to jump. After all, the aim of your anti-jump training should eventually be to catch your dog before he jumps.

If your dog jumps as soon as you come through the door/ gate, always be ready with your response. If your dog gets too excited, even though you are ignoring him, you could step back out through the gate/door and close it again, giving him a quick time-out. When you re-enter, start the anti-jump approach again.

Treats

With any of these methods, you can also use your dog's favourite treats to train anti-jump. All you need to do is to have a good supply of treats at the ready and when your dog stops jumping on you, give him a treat, as well as the attention he is looking for. If you use treats, remember to carry them with you when you first come through the door/gate, so you can always reward the right behaviour. When using treats, you can also double up the training by teaching your dog to sit for a treat. This is useful because your dog cannot jump and sit at the same time.

“Time-out”

“Time-outs” are useful for dogs in training, because they remove the one thing they most want – you! If your dog ever gets unacceptably excited, give him a NRM (“Ah Ah”) and turn away from him to warn him that you do not like his behaviour. If he continues to be too excited, tell him “Enough” then walk away into another room and shut the door. Wait for two minutes and then open the door to greet your dog again. If your dog knows “Sit”, you can ask him to sit before you give him any attention. If he does not know “Sit” yet, simply reward any non-jumping behaviour. If your dog's behaviour is still too jumpy, repeat the “time-out”. He needs to learn that this kind of jumping makes you go away.

Remember one very important point. You should never give a “time-out” to your dog and then leave it at that. Always go back and try the training again or give him casual attention. A time-out is meant to give the message (as you do the time-out) “*I REALLY don't like what you are doing, so I'm leaving*” (and after the time out) “*now I'm back and we're still friends, let's try again*”.

Jumping on friends

Finally, if you do not want your dog to jump up on your friends, ask your friends to do the same as you – no contact until the dog has four paws on the ground, then praise and treat. 🐾

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