



The Mannerly Dog

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Training Tip Sheet: Keep Your Puppy's Paws Off the Kitchen Counter

When you first get a puppy, it's time to think ahead and prevent behaviors you've seen and heard about other dogs doing and know you won't want yours to do!

Your puppy is probably too small to get his paws up on the kitchen counter at first, but if you reward him regularly for keeping them on the floor, he will never develop the habit of searching the counter for goodies.

Training your puppy to keep his paws on the floor instead of on the counter:

- Remember that if a puppy gets a reward for any behavior, he'll do it more often.
- Give your puppy a place to "be" while he's in the kitchen; he'll develop a habit of it:
 - Provide a mat or bed for him to use while you're doing kitchen chores.
 - Get him on the mat, give him a treat every few seconds, then take him out of the kitchen to play for a while. Repeat this process often, to teach him what you want him to do.
 - When you need to cook or wash dishes, get the pup on the mat and give him a chew toy or stuffed Kong to occupy him. {See The Mannerly Dog's Tip Sheet on "[Preparing Stuffed Kongs and Using Food-dispensing Devices](#)"} Or, give him a treat every few seconds.
 - Block the kitchen entrance with a baby gate or put your puppy in his crate when you can't watch him.
- Once your pup learns what you want him to do, provide a chew toy or a treat now and then for correct behavior while you're both in the kitchen.
- Work on having him keep his front paws on the floor in general:
 - Give him treats and pet him only when his front paws are on the floor
 - Never encourage jumping up, even to "give you a hug"
 - Bend over to pet him outside at the gate or fence
 - Don't let other people pet your puppy when he jumps up on them

If you don't want your puppy in the kitchen:

If you'd rather your pup not be in the kitchen at all, provide a mat or bed just outside the kitchen and follow the same procedure to teach her that's where you want her to be. Don't forget to reward her a lot for staying there at first – make an effort to go over and give her a treat quite often. You can reward her less often once she gets the idea.

If you want your puppy to stand on his back legs in other circumstances:

Later, when he is making the choice to keep his front paws on the floor in the kitchen or to stay out of the kitchen, you can carefully teach your puppy to jump up and "give you a hug" or dance or do some other trick requiring him to stand on his back legs; but only when he understands the difference and can do it only when you ask. Make things clear for him and he'll learn faster.