



The Mannerly Dog

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Training Tip Sheet: Prevent Barking and Lunging at the Front Door!

Some dogs bark and lunge at the front door when visitors come over. This behavior causes a nuisance, scares dog owners and their visitors, requires the dog to be confined in another room when company comes, and often creates the need for professional dog-training help. It's much simpler to prevent this behavior in your puppy before it develops.

Have a training session on proper front door behavior every time someone comes over.

Even more important, train your puppy in "pretend" situations – when there's not anyone coming over. He'll learn more quickly when there's no excitement involved.

- Use treats for rewards when your puppy exhibits appropriate behavior at the front door.
- Put your puppy on a leash and walk him to the front door with you.
- Open the door just a crack and give your puppy a treat for standing, sitting, or lying down next to you instead of moving toward the door; give the treat just as you're opening the door so he learns to be still and wait for the treat. Close the door, and repeat this exercise several times.
- Walk your puppy away from the door with you after several repetitions and remove the leash to let him play or do some other activity.
- Repeat this process several times throughout the day, over the next few days, and periodically as your puppy matures.
- When an actual visitor comes, be aware before they arrive so you can train your puppy. Follow the same procedure:
 - Leash the pup and take him to the door with you
 - Give him a treat as you open the door for the visitor
 - Encourage the pup to move back with you to let the visitor inside; give the pup a treat for this behavior, too.
 - Work on your puppy's greeting behavior at this point; give the visitor a treat to give him when he sits.
 - When the puppy is calm and you're ready to supervise, take the leash off.
 - Provide a chew toy or food-dispensing device to keep the puppy occupied while in your sight during the visit.
 - When the visitor is ready to leave, put the leash on the pup again and walk him to the door with you, giving him a treat while you open the door and another as the visitor exits.
 - Practice this procedure on a regular basis so your pup develops good manners at the front door and becomes a dog your visitors enjoy being around!