



The Mannerly Dog

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Training Tip Sheet: Keep Your Puppy from Jumping Up on People

Teach your puppy to greet people by sitting and he'll never jump up on them.

Why do dogs jump up on people?

1. It's fun! Dogs like to jump around, and it's fun to jump up on people. Make sure your puppy learns that it's fun to sit to greet people by giving him a treat every time along with lots of petting and affection
2. They get more attention by jumping. Puppies often get attention by jumping up. It takes effort to bend over to greet little dogs or give them treats and affection, so they put their paws up on people's legs to get closer. You pet them and give them treats without realizing what you're teaching them.

Telling a dog "Down" or "Off" or even "Sit" may change the situation, but by then he's already torn your clothes or gotten dirt on them.

The best way to prevent this behavior problem is to teach your pup to greet people politely. Sitting is a good way for puppies to greet people; they can't jump up while they're sitting, and once they learn this greeting style they'll happily do it every time.

Your dog may already be learning to "sit" when you ask him to. Sitting to greet people is different; we don't want to tell him to do it every time, we want him to do it automatically so he uses this behavior as a replacement for jumping up. Each time he approaches a person, he'll sit – just as every time he hears the word, "Sit," he'll sit.

To teach your puppy this behavior, you have to get it to happen every time he approaches a person or a person approaches him, and reward it every time with a treat. Your pup can get the additional reward of the friend talking to him and petting him when he sits. Be careful to watch your puppy's body language and don't expect him to sit in front of someone he's afraid of; see The Mannerly Dog's Training Tip Sheet on Puppy Socialization.

To get him to sit, you can lure him with a treat by placing it right in front of his nose and "drawing the nose upward with the treat," then giving the dog the treat when his rear drops into a sitting position. Over time, you'll begin seeing him hint at dropping into a sit when he sees a person approaching. Reward this hint regularly, and you'll see him sometimes actually sitting when a person approaches. Reward these "sits" and you'll see him doing this on a regular basis. He's learning to get treats, attention, and have fun by sitting to greet people, instead of by jumping up on them.

Your puppy will learn over time that in order to get affection and treats, he must sit; he will then be likely to sit when he wants something else from you, like going outside or getting his meal. He will learn to use a "sit" to "ask permission."