

Why Does My Dog Jump? by Marcia Albert

GET DOWN! OFF! STOP JUMPING! Seems as if sometimes these are the only words we use when we are with our dogs. Dogs jump for many reasons, for example, to get attention, to greet, to get something from our hands, to play. Usually when they are practicing their kangaroo routine we don't care why they jump, but we're very interested in how to stop them.

Different situations call for different solutions, so even though the "why" doesn't seem important, we do have to begin there because different situations call for different solutions.

Jumping To Greet The Family

Unfortunately, in this particular case most of us have, without even realizing, probably trained the dog to jump and carry on when we come home. It is human nature to encourage the dog's excited behavior by responding with some animation, or if we don't know what to do the dog has had lots of practice while we try to get a solution.

One of the most effective ways of stopping this frenzied behavior is for your entire family to ignore her when she is jumping. Sounds simple, and yet it is a difficult thing to do. Usually when a dog jumps we use our hands to push the dog down; or we say, "No" or "Off". If we've learned to ignore we do, but then the dog jumps, accidentally scratches us, and it hurts! We react with words "OWWW" or push him away. So in fact, we haven't ignored the dog's behavior. People say time and again, "But when she jumps my family and I yell at her or push her away, so we're not giving her attention." While the dog isn't receiving positive attention, she is getting negative attention, and when a dog can't get positive attention, negative attention will do. So, what you must do is take no notice of her, turn away and go on about settling in. If she tries to move in front, turn away. If she jumps, turn and walk away. After she settles down, wait five minutes, call her to you, ask her to sit and quietly praise her. Give her a treat also, but not every time—keep her guessing about when she'll get a treat. If she jumps during this part, start the whole thing again. Sounds like a tough thing to do, and it is; but wait.... there's more.

This process takes time. How much time? That depends on your dog and your commitment to the rules. Some dogs catch on quickly and some take weeks to learn, but look at the situation this way. You may spend a month or more practicing this exercise every day, every time any member of the family comes home, or you could end up living with Jack-In-The-Box for the next twelve years.

Jumping on Guests

Once your dog's four feet stay on the floor when family members enter the house it's time to practice for company. And here is where you find out who your true friends are. Ask a friend to help. Explain exactly how you've been practicing this exercise, and make certain your friend understands about ignoring and turning away from the dog. Next, set up a time for him to visit, but before he arrives tack a basket with dog treats on the outside of the house near the door so your friend comes in armed with tasty treats. After your friend

knocks and you've let him in watch how your dog behaves. If she jumps have your friend run through the routine; if she doesn't, have your friend ask her to sit. After she sits he gives her the treat.

Remember patience, perseverance, consistency and kindness.

Jumping for Treats

Make certain you don't share your food with the dog. If he gets used to getting samples of your snack then he'll be very interested in any food you have, and he'll jump to get your attention.

Any time you give your dog a treat make certain you keep the treats at his nose level so he's not encouraged to jump to get them. If he's a small dog, bend down to feed him.

Only give him treats if he is sitting.