

Dog Training by PJ

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So your Dog is the "Monster" at the Front Door? How to stop jumping on your guests and you!

So your dog is the "monster" at the front door? You've been told to do all sorts of things to curb this behavior - and none have worked. Let me give you some good tips on various ways to really eliminate this behavior.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, you need to keep your dog "managed" or "in control" during these exercises. To begin, use a leash while greeting guests at the front door or strangers on the street. Don't "allow the dog" to continue jump - practice makes perfect; and I don't think you are looking to teach the dog how to continue to jump. Stay out of the "jump zone" - stand just outside of where the dog can't touch the person with his paws.

GUESTS AT DOOR: Begin, with the doorbell or knock at the door. You can get help from a friend or other family member, or better yet, have a dog-greeting party at the front door. Begin, with the doorbell ring; leash the dog and "help" the dog go to where you wish him to remain while guests arrive. The fun part is the doorbell or knock actually becomes the dog's cue or command to sit. Have your friends who came for the "dog greeting party," rotate through the house or take turns ringing the bell or knocking on the door. You as the owner will keep the dog "managed" with the leash - you are the "tether station" and will not allow the dog to place his paws on the person arriving. The friend comes in, with the small food reward/reinforcer kept down low enough to keep the dog's paws on the floor and near the dog's nose. Stand quietly and be patient - when the dog "finally sits" reward/reinforce the sit behavior immediately. Repeat the exercise. It is important that your friend does not stimulate the dog with an excited voice greeting, the quieter the better. The friend must reject or ignore the dog while the dog jumps around. The leash aids you to not allow the dog to "practice" the bad behavior. Remember you are the "tether station" you do not budge. The friend or "guest" will be the "trainer" for this exercise. After a few practice sessions each day, you will decrease the dog's likelihood of jumping on your guests.

The idea is to have your dog sit quietly for a period of time before greeting the friend.

YOU COME BACK INTO HOUSE: If you have just come home or re-entered your house and the dog is at the front door (well of course, he is) - begin with arriving at the door with a small food offering (a very yummy piece) walking in the door with the "lure/food" low enough and reaching for the dog's nose, allowing him to nibble as you back him away from the door. While he is still interested in the lure/food, you will ask him to sit. If you need to lure him to a sit - it is okay - because the more he practices the better behavior to sit, it will increase the likelihood he will sit when you arrive. If he begins to jump, back out through the door and wait patiently. When the dog begins to settle some, repeat the exercise with the low food lure so when you enter the door the dog's nose goes to the food lure and you have him sit. Reward the good sit and repeat. Again, practice this exercise several times before "arriving" in the house. Reward the quiet sit with a quiet "good dog," and a food reward/reinforcer. Be sure to keep your hands and at your side or directly in front of the dog's nose. Your dog is not diseased, don't stand tall and stiff. Stay low and relaxed; keep your hands low enough so the dog can greet you (and the food) without jumping. Again, if you do multiple entries on the same day, over a period of time your dog will go to the front door and be waiting patiently for a food reward/reinforcer. Eventually, when you have a "SOLID" sit on your first entry you can begin to use a more random food reward system. Be sure to have a solid behavior before removing the small reinforcer of food. If your dog slips backwards and begins jumping - you moved too fast with extinguishing the food reward.

LETTING DOG OUT OF "KENNEL OR GATED AREA" WHEN YOU ARRIVE: Again, it is all about practicing the better behavior. Don't even think about opening the gate to allow the dog out to jump on you. Patience, please. Stand with your hands low, in front of the gate - have your food reward/reinforcer ready; after what seems like a lifetime, when the dog finally sits or settles down, you will touch the gate or latch. If the dog jumps around again; keep your hand on the latch until he settles down; each time, the dog settles in each "step" of this gate opening you will reward/reinforce the dog for the better behavior (sit or at least not jumping) - in other words, the gate doesn't EVER open if the dog is "crazy." If the dog begins barking - turn around quickly, don't look back and walk away. When the dog finds his "quiet button" return and repeat the exercise. Yes, this could seem like a

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lifetime to teach - but you are teaching a lifetime behavior. If you "allow the dog" to do what you don't want him to do - it will become the practiced behavior.

DON'T ALLOW YOUR DOG TO JUMP ON STRANGERS: You can again, set up this practice, with friends (who will act as those they are strangers you meet on the street.) While the dog remains on a leash (tethered to you - leash in your hand - don't "reel" the dog out) have the stranger approach your dog with hands low, food lure in hand, and approaching the dog's nose with all four paws on the ground - the stranger (friend) should not step inside the dog's "jump zone" (just outside where the dog can't reach the person approaching because of the leash management) --- keep the dog's paws on the ground and reward for four paws on the ground; back up and repeat; when the stranger can approach the dog and dog doesn't offer to jump, then you can request the dog to sit when the stranger approaches and only when the dog sits, does the stranger provide the food reward/reinforcer.

REINFORCERS / REWARDS - I am always asked about food as a "reward" however, if you really consider you are "reinforcing or rewarding" good behaviors instead of always yelling at the dog to not do "what ever it is you don't want the dog to do. I'm going to challenge you and ask you to think about "what would you like your dog to do instead of "jump" on people - telling them "no," "don't," "stop-it," "off" or any other endless words you are not teaching the dog what you would rather have the dog do - if you teach sit instead the dog will begin to "offer" the behavior if reinforced with something pleasurable. If you use learning theory and positive reinforcements to teach your dog, you will find that if you "reward the good behavior" that behavior will INCREASE - if you ignore the "bad behavior" that behavior will DECREASE. However sometimes you need to "redirect or teach an alternative behavior." Try having the dog sit instead of jumping on guests or on you - that is redirecting or teaching an alternative behavior.

Try a dog training class - seriously - at Dog Training by PJ we specifically practice this "no jumping on people" in our puppy kindergarten, adolescent or toy/small dog classes, nearly each session. Talk about practice makes perfect. Well, we aim to help you teach your dog not to jump.