

WHAT IS JUMPING?

Jumping is to spring clear off the ground or other support by a sudden muscular effort. Contrary to what some might think, dogs do not sit down during the day and plot out a strategy on their laptops for clouting their owners or visitors upon their arrival to the hacienda.

Ironically, humans teach dogs that jumping is acceptable at a very early age. Puppies rise to the occasion to be near us. Most pups are rewarded continuously for pawing at us to say “hi there”, to be caressed, or taken outside.

We very often welcome this gesture of joyful greeting; that is until someone gets slammed into a countertop, has their lap toasted by hot coffee, or even worse, gets knocked to the ground.

A dog’s interpretation may sound like this: “Okay, I usually achieve my goals for getting attention, to play, for food, to be picked up or massaged, by pawing and/or jumping. Wow, apparently it is not acceptable anymore because I got bonked on the snout this time. I’m really confused! What the heck is the matter with this human? How come she is lying on the ground? That never happened before. I think I’m in trouble. Just look at her “ugly” face. *Run!*”

It is a humbling experience to be accosted by a 130 lb. Newfie, if they haven’t been taught to jump gently and “on cue”. Putting the jump on cue is called “targeting”. It gives the dog an opportunity to jump towards a target away from your body, like an outstretched hand. Using a “sit” first is mandatory. A sitting dog can’t jump. They can scooch around, but not jump.

Teach your dog how to engage in activity that expends the “jumping energy”. If a dog plays dog sports and jumps hurdles, that’s better the jumping bodies.

The safest approach with children is to teach them to have the puppy/dog sit front before anything else. Sitting is savvy dog manners.

Dogs can be taught to jump up with their paws on your shoulders, without plunging you through a wall with a mighty force that can’t be described, only experienced, as long as you teach the “up” and “off” first. This needs to be grounded in basic foundational training.

CUEING AND TRANSITIONS

Begin teaching puppies to sit on cue the moment they enter the human family abode (*a huge transition for a pup*). It is easy because puppies sit naturally at two weeks old. Begin shaping voluntary sits, rather than focusing on the involuntary jumping (behavior shaping). When the pup jumps or paws, gently request a sit by bringing a delicious piece of kibble or treat in front of their muzzle, wiggle it, and bring it over the pup’s head. 99.9% of the pups will sit ... down or rollover. So, probability is on your side here. Work smart, not hard!

BE THE DIRECTOR OF THE SCENE

Visualize all homecomings and visitations between your dog and friends, family members or strangers on the street (*be streetwise*) before it happens! Pretend that you are the “director” of the scene. Plan, visualize and ask yourself how do you want this movie to end? Factor in unpredictability and be flexible. What would be the most optimum scenario? Actors may do some improvising to their scripts, but they always have a “director” to ensure they give the best performance possible. Do this for your pup during social encounters. Direct everyone to gently request a sit from your pup before greeting rituals begin. Sit is saying, “hello with savvy”.

CHANGES IN THE SCRIPT?

Some actors have a great chemistry that comes across on screen. Conversely, we have all experienced some movies that we wished we hadn’t paid for! Every interaction between your pup and an individual will be different depending on the environment, past and present associations. You can’t control every nuance of activity that happens, but as a good director, you can change the script.

Your pup may sit for you and other family members, but maybe not for Aunt Emma who bends over and in a cheery voice, says, “*come here, puppy, jump on Auntie Em’s lap*”. If you really want this to turn out to be a good movie, direct Auntie Em to request a sit, then it’s your choice whether she can pick up the pup or not. What kind of precedent will it set for future greetings? Are you planning sequels to the movie entitled, “*Jumping on People-II*”?



“I’m telling you, it takes team work. Don’t worry, they won’t blame you ... your cats. Cats get away with everything.”

OTHER OUTAKES

Troubleshooting on a daily basis will ensure that your dog learns the difference between what's on and off limits. Behavior shaping shouldn't happen when there is an incident. It should be an integral and natural part of living in a home of humans for the dogs. This extends throughout the dog's lifetime in many difference scenes including jumping on sofas, beds, tables and countertops. Choose the pieces of furniture you will allow your dog to jump on. Want to cuddle on the couch to watch "*Jumping on People – Part 8*"? Okay, then teach the up and off on "*select*" pieces of furniture. Dogs learn this easily. Clever dogs will select their own choice pieces of furniture when you aren't looking, if the consequence in the past hasn't been one that helps them realize the difference!

Know that although dogs have keen eyesight, they do not discriminate between a "*peach*" colored comforter and a "*navy blue*" one. A comforter is a comforter, period. If rainy, muddy paw prints are going to infuriate you on the "*peach*" comforter, better not teach "*on the bed*". An alternate approach (*and there are many*) would be to put "*Eli-dogs*" own comforter on the bed, or teach him to jump on the side to snuggle and say "*good night*". Better still, hide a biscuit for him to find before bed, then "*good-night*".

For work in pet-assisted therapy, we teach the "*touch*" to puppies and adults. This is a great way to temper exuberance, get the pups focused and safely close to a human who might be fragile or in a wheelchair. Begin by holding your finger out and say, "*touch*". The pup will touch automatically, guaranteed (99.9%). Praise and treat, or click if you are clicker training. As you progress, begin to ask for a head or paw on the lap. Read about shaping behaviors and clicker training in "*Train Your Dog, Change Your Life*". You need to teach the difference between "*too hard*" and "*just right*". By putting "*touch*" or any other behavior on request (target training), you create a reliable and impressive way to enjoy these behaviors. You are channeling the behaviors in a positive way!



Jumping should be exclusive to an area where it will be safe for you, your dog and others. Give them a job to do or a sport that they enjoy for mental stimulation ... FOCUS on rewarding the behavior you want!

Change happens from within, not from the external ... if you want to change your dog's or anyone else's behavior, you need to shift even a micro change of your own behavior first ...

Take a deep breath and exhale!



JOYFUL JUMPING!

**Awareness
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