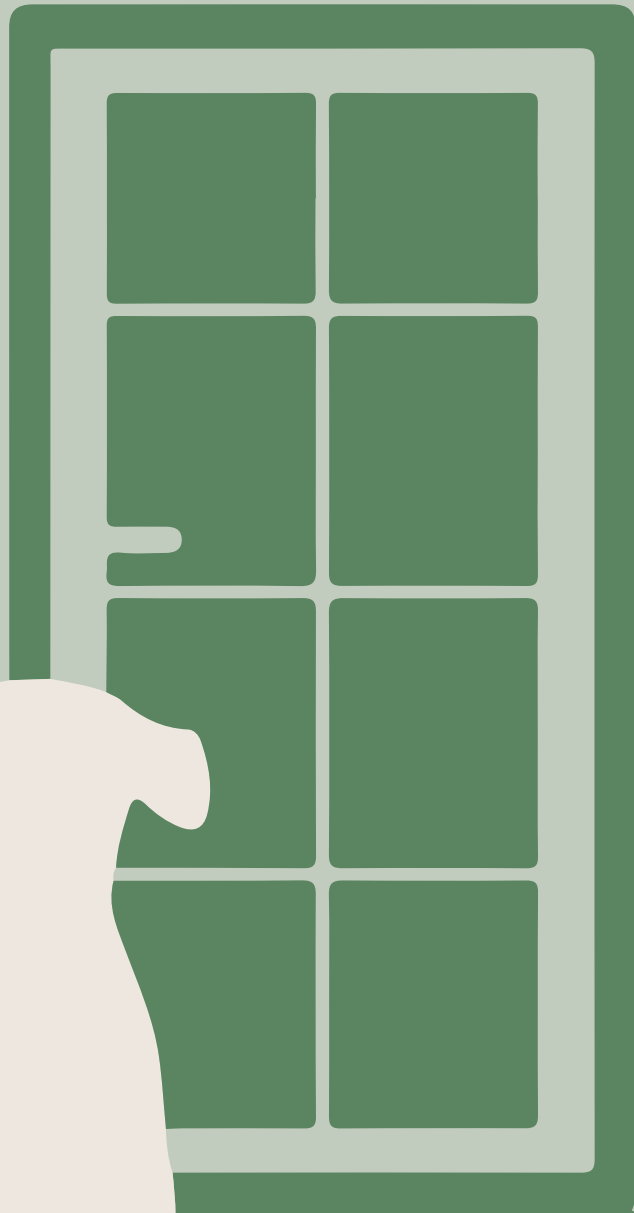


Expect the Pawsible  
positive dog training



**CALM  
GREETINGS**  
*of guests*

# CALM GREETING OF GUESTS

OK - now let's transition into teaching your dog not to jump up on house guests. Luckily for you, this goes back to asking our dogs to do most of the muscle memory work, rather than us having to do it ourselves!

Alright, so, just like with the standard for a calm greeting with you, the standard for a calm greeting with houseguests is that your dog should keep all four paws on the ground, without any licking or extreme vocalizing. The feeling of entering into a home and having someone else's dog unexpectedly jump on you, while also licking and pawing you, isn't a pleasant one. People generally feel pretty uneasy when their personal space is invaded, and you wouldn't want your dog to set a negative tone for your guests by jumping up on them.



Now, all dogs are fully capable of greeting houseguests in an appropriate manner - they just need to be shown exactly what their job should be when a guest does come over. Currently, your dog thinks that their job is to jump up and down in excitement, just like they do when you arrive home. Fortunately, there are a few other jobs that your dog could be doing instead, making the process of greeting new people go much more smoothly. For now, we're going to use the simplest one for your dog, which is for your dog to sit until your guest has entered and gotten comfortable. Only once everyone is ready should you give your dog the release word to greet the guest. And, if all four paws are ever not on the ground, you'll need to end the greeting, either taking your dog away from the houseguest or the houseguest leaving.

Now, to train this, you're going to need to recruit the help of friends, neighbors and family members who don't live in your house. It's absolutely crucial to have someone who doesn't live in your house help you with this training, because it's pretty much impossible to train your dog to properly greet new people if you don't actually have new people to practice with.

So here are the step-by-step instructions regarding what to do:

1. Begin by making sure that your dog is on a leash.
2. Then, have a friend ring the doorbell or knock on the door.
3. Next, tell your dog to "sit".
4. Then, as the houseguest enters the house, have your dog sitting in the same room, but not near the door.

5. If your dog breaks the SIT, have your houseguest go back outside while you tell your dog to "sit" again.

6. Once your dog is sitting, your houseguest can enter the house again.

7. You should have your dog remain sitting while the houseguest comes in and greets you. If, at any time, your dog breaks their "sit", once again have the houseguest step back outside the door and reissue the "sit" command. Once your dog sits, the person can re-enter the house and approach you to greet you.

8. Then, once your dog has remained sitting the whole time, you can give them the release word to greet the guest, with you still holding on to the leash. If, at any time, your dog starts to jump on your guest, use the leash to pull your dog away from the houseguest, and have the houseguest leave the house.

Ok... so this is going to be a test of your true leadership skills at work. Make sure that as soon as you see your dog trying to jump, or becoming too excited, you immediately stop the greeting, showing that you are the one in control of your dog. Ask the person to quickly exit your home, while you pull your dog away. This way, you're teaching your dog that all the fun and good things come to an end when they become too excited. Right... so that wraps up calm greetings, as well as not jumping on houseguests. I hope that you have some people that you can recruit to help you in training this. The more people you have, the better your dog will learn that all humans entering the house are to be greeted calmly.

Now so far, we've talked about what to do if your dog gets over-excited when you have visitors. However, some dogs tend to get aggressive when you have visitors and we need to use a different set of training techniques to handle that situation. So the next thing we're going to be doing today is work on an alternative use of the "say hello" exercise. This follows on from a previous class, where we discussed using the "say hello" exercise to introduce your dog to other dogs and people during your walks, so we're now going to talk about how to use the same exercise to greet people who come to your house. As usual, it's always best to start with familiar people, meaning people that your dog already knows and loves. Once you've succeeded with this, you can then graduate to trying the exercise with friends who are less familiar. As before, you'll need to have your dog on a leash for this, and you should be practicing this exercise outside, right in front of your home. After you've had several successful greetings outside, you can then practice this exercise inside.

Right, when practicing inside, you'll need to tell your dog to "sit", and then "watch", after the person has knocked on the door or rung the bell. Keep praising your dog for being relaxed, right up to the moment that they start barking or acting aggressively towards your friend. Offer food rewards when your dog is sitting quietly, but immediately stop all food and praise at the first sign of aggression. Again, tell your dog to "watch", and then reward them for focusing on you.

Once your dog is calm, open the door and greet your visitor, asking them to enter. This person should then enter your house without looking at your dog. It's also important that they remain at a distance of at least six feet away from your dog. Your visitor should then turn sideways and crouch down low to your dog's level. Then, without looking at your dog, your visitor should hold out a high value treat in their open palm. If your dog is responding to you and acting calmly, go ahead and release them with the "say hello" command. This is your dog's cue to go over to the visitor and take the treats from that person's hand.

So, while still on a leash, let your dog approach your visitor and accept the treat, and then praise them heavily. Make sure that you don't allow your visitor to touch your dog in any way. If your dog is showing any signs of excessive fear, timidity or skittishness, or is acting overly protective or aggressive with your visitor, do not allow them to take treats from your visitor's hand. In these situations, it's important for your visitor to drop the treats onto the ground for your dog, so that your dog doesn't have the opportunity to get too close to this person. In this case, your dog shouldn't be allowed to be closer than six feet from your visitor.

Now, if your dog is too stressed to approach your visitor, you need to respect that. You should never try to force your dog to greet a person who is making them uncomfortable. Instead, stop the exercise and try again another day. In some cases, you might be able to simply back up to give your dog more distance, and then try again. In this case, your visitor should just drop the treats onto the ground for your dog, rather than having your dog go up to them to eat the treats out of their hand.

Whichever way you do it, once your dog is done eating the treats from your visitor, you need to then lure them away with a treat of your own. Avoid applying any pressure to the leash, because tensing up on the leash may signal "danger" to your dog, and, since your dog is already stressed out, you really don't want to be creating any more drama. Instead, try to keep the leash loose at all times.

It's really important to go at your dog's pace when working on this exercise, and make sure that you don't allow strangers to pet your dog. Most people usually touch a dog on the head, which signals dominance, and this can be threatening to a nervous dog. Over time, you'll be able to gradually reduce the distance between your dog and your visitors, but you should always let your dog choose whether or not to approach. This is the only way you'll be able to build your dog's trust in the stranger and the situation, as well as in you, as their leader.

Ok, until your dog has had some practice greeting strangers, you'll need to take them into another room whenever strangers enter your home. Don't let your dog "rehearse" excessive barking, skittishness, or overly-protective behavior. Each time they get overly fearful and practice this reactive behavior, the problem will become even more ingrained.

Great! Remember that this is a process that takes time and patience before results can be seen. It may take several days, or even several weeks, but your work will pay off. It really is worth the effort to see a much calmer, happier and well-adjusted dog at the end of it.