



# HOW TO

stop your dog  
from jumping

# STOP YOUR DOG FROM JUMPING

So now we're going to talk about how to train your dog to stay calm when you come home, transforming those over-the-top and over-excited greetings into welcomings that are calm but loving.

So, the standard for a calm greeting is for your dog to keep all four paws on the ground when you walk in the door, or when you let them out of their crate after you've arrived home. I personally believe that a calm greeting should not include lots of vocalizing or whining from the dog. That vocalization will only make your dog more excited, and since this isn't what we want, I like to define a calm greeting by saying that all four feet should be on the ground, and there should be no vocalizing from the dog. But, I'll let you decide for yourself whether or not you want to include the "no vocalizing" in the standard for training a calm greeting with your own dog.

Now, as I'm sure you have seen, no matter how long we may have been gone for, our dogs are always ready to excitedly greet us as soon as we walk in through the door. Now I know that at this point some of you are probably thinking, "but my dog is the only one who seems to care when I arrive home, so I like being greeted"! Don't worry, I'm still encouraging you to greet your dog, but just keep the greeting controlled. Even though this may be the only happy greeting you get all day, it can still be welcoming without being over-the-top.



Now, when dogs jump up on people to greet them, it can definitely be overwhelming. The jumping dog may have dirty paws, or sharp nails. Even though people enjoy receiving a happy greeting, very few people enjoy getting dirty and scratched up when greeted by their dog. The sharp nails of a dog could rip clothing, or, even worse, your skin. Plus, our hands are often full with groceries or work accessories when we arrive home, making encountering a jumping dog even more unpleasant, and possibly also unsafe. We also need to take into account any older people who might end up being knocked over by excited greetings. No one wants their arrival home to involve pain, or ruined clothing. Plus, when left unchecked, jumping can easily turn into demanding and dominant behavior.

Ok, so let's talk about how to stop our dogs from jumping up. Now, when a person is presented with an unpredictable object coming at them, natural instinct says to step back and away. This is our mind and muscle memory at work. Many people would also put their hands and arms up in front of their chest, as a way to defend themselves, which is another natural instinct. Unfortunately, both of these instinctive behaviors only play right into the dog's trap. Stepping back and away helps the dog to accomplish their goal of making contact with us, because this actually helps the dog to better balance on us with their front feet. And, by putting our arms up to defend ourselves, we are likely to end up making contact with the dog's head, or even their tongue. Unfortunately, in the dog's mind, all of this contact would be considered as a positive. Many people often respond to their dog by telling them "no", while looking directly at them. Some may even use their hands to push their dog off them. However, don't forget that talking to, as well as touching, your dog will only make them happy, and pushing them off may even be viewed by your dog as a fun new game.

So, it's now time for you to change your own habits and create a new response to your dog jumping on you. As a result of this, your dog's response will then change too. Now, changing a habit like this in yourself can actually be quite difficult, simply due to the fact that we've made it our mind and muscle memory for decades. So, don't be concerned if you find it unnatural, or even difficult to remember, at least to begin with. I would suggest that, before you walk into your house, make a mental note of what you need to do as soon as you walk in through the door. If you know that your dog is likely to jump up on you as soon as you enter your home, be prepared to immediately follow the steps that I'm about to show you, to save yourself from being used as a trampoline by your dog. Ok, so, instead of stepping back away from your jumping dog, continue your motion of walking forwards, so that you walk about four steps into your dog. Also, rather than having your hands defensively held up in front of you, keep them firmly by your sides, or even in your front pant pockets if possible. That way, your dog won't be able to make any contact with your hands. And, in addition to all of that, make sure that you also don't look at, or talk to, your dog. You will probably need to turn your head to the side to ensure that you're looking away from your dog, while saying absolutely nothing. You are now stepping into your dog's personal space, and, just like how you're taken by surprise when they jump into your space, they will now be pretty surprised that you've stepped into theirs.

Once you change your own response to your dog's jumping, your dog will be forced to change actions too. With you stepping into, rather than away from your dog when they jump, your dog won't be able to properly balance on you with their front paws, thwarting a successful jump. They also won't be receiving any form of verbal or eye contact from you, which they would have otherwise viewed as positive reinforcement. Your new body movements will be incompatible with their jumps, preventing them from balancing on their two hind legs, while your tucked away hands will block any physical contact, resulting in your dog failing in its objective of getting attention from you.

So, to prevent your dog from jumping on you, you will need to practice the following movements:

1. To begin with, as soon as you see your dog about to jump on you, continue on with a forward motion. At the same time, make sure to turn your head away from your dog. Remember to hold your arms firmly by your sides, with your hands in your pockets if possible.
2. Continue forward, not stopping until you have taken 4 steps towards your dog.
3. Once your dog has stopped jumping, tell them to sit instead.
4. If they sit, greet your dog calmly. If your dog tries to jump on you again, stop the greeting.

So, like I said before, this new reaction from you will surprise your dog. Your dog will most likely end up losing their balance and falling to the side. Don't worry, this is ok - it's not going to hurt your dog. Once your dog has regained their balance, they may even try to jump up on you again - this is just their mind and muscle memory working. Again, don't worry if your dog does this. All you need to do is step into them again, as many times as necessary, to stop them from jumping on you. Once you've changed your own reaction to your dog's behavior, your dog will then change their behavior. But like I said, this will take repeated practice.

Once your dog stops jumping on you, to dissuade them from attempting to jump on you again in the future, give them the job of sitting. Give your dog the "sit" command once you come back home, and once they respond, praise and greet them calmly. Keep this to just a few chest rubs, or some pats on the back, so that the greeting remains low-key.



Oh, and here's one more useful tip for you - try to make it a habit of not greeting your dog until they have calmed down. This may mean that you will need to ignore your dog for the first 3 to 5 minutes after you first arrive home. If it takes longer than this for your dog to calm down, then wait longer. By doing this, you'll be teaching your dog that their excitement won't get your attention, but being calm will. If you usually crate your dog while you're out, this greeting time doesn't need to be any different. Tell your dog to "sit" before you open the door to their crate, making sure that they remain sitting while you do so, until you give them the release word. If they break their "sit" before the release word is given, quickly close the crate door with your dog inside, keeping it closed until your dog sits. They'll soon learn that sitting calmly leads to the door opening and them getting out. If your dog isn't sitting, then the door doesn't open. Once your dog is out of the crate, the greeting process should be the same as before, meaning that you don't actually greet your dog until they are calm. If you want to pet them once they are out of their crate, tell them to "sit". If they can't stay calm, then ignore them until they can. Ok, great, I think that's all we need to cover for training your dog to stay calm when you arrive home. Like I said before, this command is all about us changing our habits, rather than us training our dogs to do something new. You'll soon get an idea of how your dog feels when you ask them to change one of their habits - it's not easy! It takes quite a bit of forethought and energy, even when it feels like we don't have any left to give, such as after a long and tiring day. Just like with all of the other behaviors we've trained, plenty of practice and repetition is the only way to achieve the goal of keeping your dog calm while you greet them.