

# Holiday Manners

## Greeting Guests



It's time for the holidays! Fun days ahead! If you have a dog, this also means introducing your dog to your family, and hosting dinner parties.

### How will your dog do?

Will he sit nicely when saying hello? Will he jump up!? If this is something that you think about, and maybe even worry about, don't stop reading. This article will help you understand why your dog is jumping or misbehaving when people come in through the door. It will also give you a few helpful tips that will get you started on curbing the unwanted jumping behaviour that MANY of our dogs do when our guests come over to visit.

Understanding why dogs like to jump up on new people, and sometimes even the people they see every day, helps us to solve the problem. It is always important to understand why you are doing what you are doing when teaching your dog to make better choices.

When dogs greet each other naturally, after an appropriate approach, if they like each other, and are excited about each other, they will often jump up on each other playfully. They are, generally, only being friendly and playful. They certainly can learn to have appropriate manners when happy to see people. It does take a little bit of patience, understanding, and commitment from you as the owner/ parent/ companion of your playful pooch!

## ***Set your pup up for Success***

Make it difficult for him to practice the behaviour you don't like, such as jumping up. Make it easy to easier for him to make the right choices by restricting his choices. One of the best ways to accomplish both these ideas, is to have a lead on your dog. In many cases, a short 2' lead is all you need. Use this lead to PREVENT your dog from being able to make contact with the person of interest. If you can safely use a longer lead, you can step on the lead to prevent your dog from advancing. \*Remember that dogs should ALWAYS be supervised when wearing ANY length of lead! A lead hanging near to the front door is always handy, along with an easy jar of treats!

## ***Show your dog what you would like him to do instead!***

Now that your dog, and your environment, has been set up for you and your dog to succeed, choose a behaviour you would like your pup to be doing instead of the one you don't like; a replacement behaviour. A great suggestion for dogs who like to jump up when happy, is a sit, or maybe even to lie down. For the first 2 weeks, EVERY TIME your pup offers you a sit, or down, say "YES" or Click to reinforce these behaviours, and give your dog treat!

Remember, treats do not have to be bigger than a grain of puffed rice, and can even be your dog's kibble (with the odd piece of liver in between!) Freeze dried liver is an easy one to have in jars conveniently around the house. Mix some kibble and puffed rice in to keep it interesting and spread out the treats. Being prepared will give you the best results as you can reward every sit or down your dog has to offer! Let your dog know what behaviours you love to see!

## ***Turn your voice into a Valuable Reward***

Be careful not to accidentally re-enforce the behaviour you do not like, such as jumping up. It is so easy to relax when things are going well, and then get up, yell, push, interact with your dog every time they do something you don't like. When we do this, we may not realize it, but we are actually re-enforcing the unwanted behaviour. Dogs begin to realize that to get your attention they should jump up on you, your children or your house guests.... or maybe vhew the baseboards. When a dog is bored and maybe feeling lonely any attention is better than no attention.

So what can we do? Start talking to your dog and praising him, interacting with him when he does the things we like. For timely, and lasting training, tell your dog "YES", or click EVERY time he does the behaviour you want (sit), and follow up with a food reward within a few seconds after your sound letting him know what you liked.

## ***Specific Tips for Guests***

Begin by greeting your guests with your dog on leash, either attached to you (umbilical cord), or dragging depending on how fast he runs towards your guests.

If he greets with too much energy moving forward, interrupt him by picking up his leash (if dragging), or simply by walking away from your guest with your dog attached. When your dog comes with you say "Good boy/girl" and walk back towards your guest. If possible, stop walking before he begins to pull forward. Wait or ask for a "SIT". If success, "YES"/click, and reward with a treat, and maybe even a hello if he is close enough and calm enough. \*Remember to continue to set your dog up for success!

## ***Sometimes we need to interrupt our dog verbally***

Only use a sound/vocal interrupter when you missed the chance to prevent the behaviour. If you rarely use this sound, it will be effective. If you use it too much, it will quickly loose it's power. I like to use the sound "AH" in a sharp, loud tone. Because I am a fairly quiet person with my dogs, and I rarely use this sound, they know it well, and it stops them dead in their tracks. Then I can redirect them away from practicing trouble, such as jumping up, and help them make the right choice so I can then reward and reinforce the behaviour I would like to see again and again!

## ***Prevent, Redirect, & Reward!! Prevention really is the best medicine.***

Remember these 5 steps and watch your dog perform in a way that will make you proud this holiday season. Always remember that training your dog should be fun! Genevieve and Pawsitive Plus Dog Training are always happy to share new ideas for training games that will help you achieve all your training goals!



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