

# Unruly behaviors in dogs

## Jumping up

1. Whenever the young pet walks up to a person, it should not get attention or rewards of any type unless it sits (say please). See Handout 13 on web.
2. The key to changing any behavior is consistency and timing. Jumping up on people should not be allowed at any time. Appropriate behavior should be calmly and immediately rewarded.
3. Avoid accidentally encouraging or rewarding unwanted behavior. Any attention, including eye contact and even discipline, can reinforce behavior by giving attention.
4. Train your dog to exhibit an acceptable response at greetings. You can use "sit," "down," or "go to mat" commands when people enter the home. Encourage and reward the desired response.
5. If the pet begins to jump up, immediately stop eye contact and turn away. Interrupting the behavior with a "no" or "tssk" might stop the jumping but should not be used if it causes fear or avoidance. A head halter with leash left attached is a more effective way to interrupt jumping immediately and get a successful sit.
6. If your pet has already been inadvertently rewarded for jumping on visitors, you will need to set up training sessions with a series of repeated greetings.
  - (a) Ask a friend or family member to knock or ring the doorbell. Instruct the person to avoid eye contact, touching, or talking to the pet when the door is opened until the pet is in the desired position for greeting, e.g., sitting, lying down.
  - (b) If the pet knows commands, ask for the desired behavior. Otherwise, lure the dog into position with a toy or treat, or leave a leash and head halter attached to get an immediate and successful sit. If the dog remains sitting, the person can lightly stroke the dog while continuing to give treats.
  - (c) Completely ignore the pet if it jumps up. Get the pet back into the desired position (by command, lure, or head halter) and have the visitor try additional low-key greetings until successful.
  - (d) Ask the person to leave and repeat the entrance and greeting.
  - (g) All family members should be consistent about rewarding desirable behavior and avoiding any attention for jumping.

## Getting on the furniture or into rooms where the dog is not allowed

1. Once rules are established regarding what the pet is allowed to do, all family members must consistently follow the rules.
2. Desirable behavior should be encouraged and reinforced. Provide acceptable locations for your pet to sleep and play with its toys. Reward and encourage use of these areas.
3. If you are sitting on furniture and the pet approaches, ask it to sit. Give it a toy to keep it occupied while it remains on the floor.
4. If you are supervising and your pet attempts to get onto the furniture or into an off-limits room, it must be interrupted or deterred as soon as the behavior begins.
5. Physical punishment should be avoided. Rather, an immediate unpleasant disruption such as a verbal "no" or "off" or a noise (such as a shake can, ultrasonic or audible alarm) can be used, provided it stops the behavior without causing fear. Leaving a leash attached to the dog's head halter or harness can immediately stop the behavior with a properly timed pull.
6. Whenever you cannot supervise, your dog must be prevented from getting on the furniture or going into rooms that are out of bounds. The easiest way to do this is to confine the pet by using baby gates or confining to a crate, pen, or room. Booby traps such as motion-activated sprays and alarms, spray collars that are activated when the pet goes near the "transmitter" device, and alarm mats may deter some pets.

## Raiding garbage or stealing food

1. Training the dog to stay away from garbage cans or food that has been left on a table or counter may be extremely difficult if the dog is highly food-motivated and the area is accessible.
2. If you are available to supervise your dog, you can prevent access to the food or garbage by using a sharp "leave it" command as it approaches the food or garbage. Leaving a long leash attached to the dog's harness or head halter provides a means of physical prevention which can immediately follow the "leave it" command if the dog does not walk away.
3. If your dog has previously stolen food from the trash or off the counter or table, the high-value reward the pet has received will encourage further attempts. Therefore when you cannot supervise, the best advice is to keep food or garbage out of the pet's reach, or in inaccessible areas and dog-proofed containers. Safe confinement can be used to keep the pet away from food and garbage. Booby traps (mentioned above) or bitter-tasting repellents can also be used to keep pets away from areas, but if food is involved the potential benefit to the pet may be too strong to overcome with avoidance training.
4. Be sure the pet is receiving adequate amounts of food each day so it is not hungry. If it is too lean, increase the amount that is fed. If the pet's weight is normal, switch to a low-calorie diet so the volume can be increased.