

A New Way to Greet - Four on the Floor

Dogs of all breeds jump up to greet each other. And people too. It all starts in puppyhood and becomes a problem as the dog gets bigger. Licking the mouth of the mother dog was a puppy's way to ask for food. So jumping up for a pup is a way to get attention, food or whatever the puppy wants. Jumping up is a problem for the big dogs even though the little ones are just as "jumpy." Few people complain about the small breeds jumping up because their nails are not as painful and they don't knock you down! There is old and new information and tools to stop the jumping up. There is a quick and easy way to get the jumping up to stop, and as usual it will mean the human has to act counter to what you would think would work! That's because you have to reward the right behavior - all 4 paws on the ground for all greetings.



Corrections like yelling, jerking on the collar, swatting or knee in the chest don't work. Why? Because that all of these techniques give the dog a response from you (even in a negative way). To the dog the greeting is returned. It may not make sense to you, but remember we are talking about dogs. In a way we do the same - we slap each other on the back, shake hands, or hug when we meet. Imagine if we did not speak the same language of someone, wouldn't we do something physical to get attention?

So here is the secret to stopping jumping up. Any and all touching, commanding, or even looking at your dog happens only when all 4 paws are on the ground. The hard part is for us to stop our inclination to push the dog off, pet them or look at them saying "noooooo." Start by touching your dog only when all 4 paws are on the ground. As soon as they start to jump up take a huge step back, turn your back to them and stand still for a count of 5. No talking, no looking no nothing! The dog is not getting what they want. They will stop jumping. As soon as they are standing or have all 4 paws on the ground, verbally praise them. Lots of praise and as soon as they start to jump shut it off like a switch, turn around and nothing. If they keep all 4 on the floor, then pet them calmly. Keep your greeting calm to help them keep calm. If they are leaping in the air away from you still ignore them. Remember 4 on the floor.

It helps a lot to just go ahead and praise and pet your dog when it is just standing there doing nothing. It's like catching your dog being good - all 4 are on the floor. The tough times are when you come home. Take a deep breath, stand still, wait and when your dog has 4 on the floor greet them. It's ok for them to be a bit wiggly as they have all 4 on the floor. How polite you ask your dog to be is up to you. The first level is to stop jumping up. If you have small children, older people or need more sanity about greeting wait until your dog is sitting for greeting after they have learned to not jump up.

What to do if other family members encourage jumping up? After you have scolded that person for sabotage, and making life more difficult for you and the dog don't despair. Your dog will learn to not jump up on you and still jump up on them. The dog will learn to greet nicely for you but still jump on them. What is still a problem is that the dog will likely jump up on new people since it knows 2 ways to greet and jumping up is the greeting the dog is more inclined to do. If this is your situation, keep your dog in another area in the home as new people come in and command a sit or 2 before your dog can greet. Your dog will be focused on you and how you say to greet. And then tell your visitors only pet or greet as the dog has 4 on the floor. Some people like it when their dog jumps up to greet them. If you have a family member that likes this then that may never change. What can change is that for you your dog can be more polite and with your leadership can also be better mannered around others. As they say, you get the behavior you reinforce!

I have a good video demonstrating how to use the 4 on the floor technique and check out my Youtube videos. <https://www.youtube.com/user/DrSallyJFoote?feature=watch>

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