

Impulse Control: Jumping



Are you sick of a dog jumping all over you? Is someone in your house ready to drop-kick your beloved pup? If so, try these simple exercises to cure your dog of this annoying – and sometimes dangerous – behavior.

Crazy Feet – Goal here is to have unpredictable feet. Sometimes you kick them upwards sometimes out to the side, other times backwards. Softly, this is not about pain, but about surprising the jumping pup. Also, be sure to give them a chance to not jump on you by saying something first like “Don’t do it.” Note this is not for those of you with two left feet!

Leave it – Leave it is a fundamental exercise necessary for all dogs. We initially teach it using food then quickly generalize it to other things like dogs, people, bikes, deer, etc

Take out two treats, place one in each hand and put one hand in front of the dog. Say “leave it” one time and hold your hand in place. Let your dog do anything he or she wants with your hand but as soon as they take their attention off of it (even for a moment) say Yes! and give them the treat from your other hand. Repeat two more times with the same hands then switch hands and practice three times.

Move the treat to the ground (with your hand cupped over top) and your other hand behind your back. Tell the dog to “leave it” one time and again wait for them to pull back from the treat, as soon as they do say Yes! and give them a treat from your other hand. As you continue to practice, encourage your dog to pull farther and farther off the treat and for longer periods of time. Remember to use this valuable tool for everyday things as well.

Doorways – when you have a jumpy dog, you may also have a dog who bolts through doorways. Be sure to go first with these guys and use your feet, legs and knees to block them as you continue through. When your pup wants to go outside, ask them for a sit and stay. Then open the door a crack. If they break their sit, close the door. Repeat this exercise over and over, opening the door further and further, until you can open the door completely and they wait to be released.

Dinner time – Use feeding time as training time. Ask your dog to sit and stay then slowly move their bowl to the ground. If they pull out of their sit, pull up the bowl. Repeat....as many times as necessary for your dog to hold their sit while you to put the bowl on the ground. At first, release them as soon as the bowl sits on the ground but little by little ask them to remain for longer periods of time and of course, until you release them.

Many of these exercises involve teaching your pup **impulse control** – a fundamental activity that affects many behaviors, including jumping up.

Set your dog, and yourself, up for success - set up a specific amount of time to train for - say 2 weeks; that way it’s not going on forever and neither of you lose focus, plus you’ll have a specific time to recheck your pup to see how they’re doing (and change the program accordingly)

