



Helping Your “Exuberant” or “Jumpy / Mouthy” Dog

Dogs who jump up or who are very mouthy with people may be trying to play, saying hello, trying to get your attention, or might just be really excited and unsure of how to express themselves. The usual profile of a jumpy/mouthy dog is an adolescent or young adult dog with a friendly, confident and playful personality. Generally, these dogs lack training and have not yet learned appropriate manners.

Working with an exuberant dog will take practice and patience. Consistency is key to success. You'll need to ensure everyone who interacts with your dog does so in the same way. Encourage polite behavior and discourage jumping up or mouthing. Always approach training with a positive attitude and if you are feeling frustrated or discouraged, stop the training and take a break.

Tips for Success

Let your dog know that you are not interested in interacting with them when they are behaving inappropriately. When they jump or mouth:

- turn to the side and become a statue (stand still, cross arms, no eye contact or talking). Don't acknowledge the behavior.
- If that doesn't work, end the interaction. Leave the room, crate/tether your dog, or calmly put them in a quiet, dog-proof room alone. After a five-minute break, try again.
- Stand on a leash (it should be loose enough for the dog to move around freely but not jump up) which prohibits the dog from jumping up. Reward the dog when all four paws on the floor.

Teach your dog to “sit to say hi.” Wait for your dog to sit before greeting. With a calm voice, offer praise or a treat for sitting and being calm.

Work on having them “settle” at your feet and gently offer praise for lying down. If they get up to pace, call them back and use a treat to lure into a down again or if on leash, hold with approximately 4 feet of leash and wait until they offer a “settle” by lying down. Reward verbally and treat when this is done.

Teach “go-to-mat” and “stay.” Use a high value treat to calmly lure your dog onto a mat and into a down position. Reward them for holding the position and slowly increase duration and distraction until they can maintain a down position on their mat until released.

Avoid any wrestling (or high arousal/physical) games with your dog. These will increase their excitement. Instead, teach your dog to play fetch with a ball or plush toy. Praise them for picking up a toy and bringing it back to you. Ask them to “sit” before throwing the ball again. Encourage breaks to keep your dog from getting overexcited.

When your dog is excited, offer a favorite toy. To make the toy come alive, toss it away from your dog and encourage them to “get your toy!” Whenever they carry the toy around, they should receive a lot of praise and attention! The attention should stop if the toy is dropped.

Teach an “all done” or “finished” cue. For dogs who are toy obsessed and can't seem to walk away from a game, teach a cue/command that play is finished. After a play session, say “all done” and put the toy out of sight. Walk away and ignore any attempts to get you playing again. Do not repeat the “all done” cue. With consistency your dog will understand that “all done” means that the game is over.

Make sure your dog gets enough exercise and mental enrichment. Physical exercise alone will not be enough to help your dog relax. They need mental exercise too. Along with walks and fetch, find ways to provide mental stimulation. Feed them meals from puzzle toys or a Kong, teach him new tricks, or hide treats around the house and ask him to “find it!”

Use a TOOL like a pet corrector or squirt bottle to discourage your dog from jumping. These should always be applied as an act of surprise. The tool/correction should not be as if it is coming from you. This should be the last resort and used after the other above options.