

# DEALING WITH PROBLEM BEHAVIORS – JUMPING UP, GETTING ON COUNTERS AND FURNITURE

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## Jumping up

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1. From the beginning, every time the young pet walks up to a family member or visitor, it should be asked to sit, especially when children are present.
2. The key to changing this behavior is consistency. Jumping up should not be allowed by any pet at any time. Appropriate behavior should always be calmly rewarded.
3. Avoid accidentally encouraging or rewarding the behavior. Even verbal or physical discipline can actually reinforce the behavior if it is not strong enough to interrupt it.
4. Train your dog to exhibit an acceptable response at greetings. You can use a sit and settle command, or perhaps train it to expect a tummy rub when people enter the home. Encourage and reward the desired response.
5. Use a sharp noise, such as a shake can, as needed to interrupt the problem behavior. Don't use any method that involves a physical correction or discomfort, such as stepping on toes, kneeling the chest, pinching paws, alpha rolls, etc.
6. If your pet is incorrigible about jumping up on visitors, you may need to set up a training session that involves a series of repeated greetings.
  - (a) Ask a friend to knock or ring the bell. Open the door for the person to enter
  - (b) When the pet jumps up, immediately say 'no' and provide a sharp noise that will quickly interrupt the behavior without eliciting any fear or anxiety from the pet (e.g., shake can, water gun). This can also be done by using a head halter and leash.
  - (c) Ask the friend to leave and repeat the entrance and greeting.
  - (d) Anytime the pet jumps up, interrupt it. Anytime the pet doesn't jump up, ask it to sit and reward it with a very tasty treat.
  - (e) Repeat the exercise until the ratio of rewards to interruptions is at least 2:1.
  - (f) It is also helpful for family members to do repeated greetings involving interruptions and reinforcements as outlined above when they greet the pet.

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

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1. Once rules are established regarding what the pet is allowed to do, all family members must consistently follow the same rules.
2. Desirable behavior, such as lying on the floor or a dog bed, and staying away from rooms that are out of bounds, should be encouraged and reinforced. Whenever you are sitting on furniture and the pet approaches, ask it to sit and give it a toy or attention before it tries to jump up.
3. Provide acceptable alternatives for sleeping and play so that your dog can be encouraged and rewarded for sleeping on its own bed on the floor and staying in rooms that are acceptable.
4. Whenever you cannot supervise your dog, it must be consistently prevented from getting on the furniture or into rooms that are out of bounds. If your pet attempts to get onto the furniture or into the room, it must immediately be deterred as the behavior begins and not when the dog is already in the room or on the furniture
5. Physical punishment should be avoided. Rather, an immediate unpleasant disruption should be used to stop the undesirable behavior as it begins. A pull on a leash (if one has been left attached), a sharp noise (such as a shake can or audible alarm), a spray of water, or a remote control citronella collar can be used to deter the dog.
6. When you are away from home or not available to supervise, access to the area must either be prevented or deterred. This can be done by blocking access to the area, or using indoor avoidance units (e.g., citronella spray barriers, motion-activated alarms, upside down mousetraps, Snappy Trainer™, or alarm mats).

## Raiding garbage or stealing food

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1. Training the dog to stay away from garbage cans and food that has been left on a table or counter may be extremely difficult if the dog is highly food-motivated and exploratory.
2. If you are available to supervise your dog, you can prevent or deter access to the food or garbage with commands, a long leash left attached to the dog's collar so that it can be immediately interrupted with a gentle pull, a noise device such as a shake can, or a device such as a remote citronella collar or a water rifle.
3. When you cannot supervise, the best advice is to always keep the food or garbage out of the pet's reach in inaccessible areas or containers with area avoidance devices (e.g., citronella spray barriers, motion-activated alarms, upside down mousetraps, Snappy Trainer™, or alarm mats), or by confining your dog away from the area.
4. Some dogs may learn to avoid areas booby trapped with bitter tasting repellents.