

Training Strategies for Dogs Who Jump Up in Greeting

Before you get started....

- The first step in teaching a dog to greet politely is to teach them NOT to greet! You will notice below that the strategies start with teaching your dog to be calm when people approach first.
- Second, you MUST use management to prevent jumping until your dog learns to greet politely. Out and about, you may use a leash; at home you may use a leash, baby gates, an x-pen, or a crate.

Strategy 1—for pups, very bouncy dogs, and dogs who are fearful of people

Go Say Hi—this is a good option as it teaches dogs to manage their own bodies. This should be practiced with familiar people first, then with unfamiliar people. It can be used for greetings on leash or at your doorway. Practice these two elements first,

- Moving together, sit, stay sitting (see below).
- Name game call away from something interesting. Practice as a whiplash response.

Then,

- Walk up to person or person walks up to you (practice both ways).
- Say sit as person walks up. Practice enough that the person walking up becomes the cue for sit.
- Most of the time your dog will not say hi to others, so practice without your dog saying hi until he or she is really good at it!

Once your dog is very good at this step,

- Add in walk up and sit. Cue, “go say hi.”
- Helper encourages the dog to come up briefly.
- You call back right away—within seconds—with the name game.
- Repeat until your dog is automatically disengaging and coming back to you. At this point, you can have your dog stay with the person a little longer. Eventually, your dog will decide when to disengage.

At doorways,

- Teach a station for when people come in (go to bed, for example). Add a brief “go say hi”, call back, and redirect to bed. Give your dog something else to do such as a stuffed Kong or bone.
- Alternately, use a baby gate, x-pen, or crate. Teach your dog to accept the confinement first. Then use it when others come to your house. Once your dog settles, they can come out to say hi.

Strategy 2—for older puppies and dogs

Sit to Greet—this is a plan to help you prep your dog for the Canine Good Citizen test. It is also a good strategy for calmer, social dogs. This can also be taught as a “stand to greet” for dogs who are more comfortable standing. Plan on a “rule structure” for your dog. Follow a similar rule structure for people and dogs. For example: walk up, sit next to you on cue, stay in place for 30 to 45 seconds, then move ahead on cue. Practice these elements without people or dogs.

- Moving together
- Stopping together
- Sit (on cue or auto sit) (skip this for the Stand to Greet)
- Stay in position for 30 to 45 seconds
- Generalize to various locations

Practice “Pets” with you and family members,

- Have your dog sit, say “pets,” and pet briefly the way an unfamiliar person might. Mark and reward your dog for holding the sit.
- With some bouncy dogs, you may have to break this down more. For example, hands reaching, bending slightly, saying something to the dog, then touching very briefly, then petting slightly longer, then practicing from different angles and touching in different places.

Then practice with other people,

- Walk up and stop as far back as needed for success. Stop and have your dog sit. Walk away. Practice repeatedly until you can walk up to a person and have your dog sit next to you without greeting.
- As with the “Go Say Hi,” practice until the other person coming close becomes the cue for the sit.

Then,

- Walk up to person, sit, and stay. Talk to the person. As the person goes to pet, say “Pets.”