

jumping and barking

dog training basics

Training a dog takes time, understanding, patience and consistency. Here are a few of the more common training challenges pet parents face and some suggestions for working with them.

How training works:

Proper training is essential for a long, happy and safe relationship with your dog, setting the foundation to ensure your dog stays physically fit, mentally alert, socially engaged and emotionally happy. To make dog training an enjoyable and fulfilling activity, a great choice is to use a positive reinforcement approach that is rewards-based, fun and effective.

Dog training based on using positive reinforcement helps pet parents understand how dogs think, learn and communicate. In turn, the pet parents will understand how to encourage and reward appropriate and polite dog behaviors for real-life situations. This builds and nurtures the bond between the pet parent and their dog.

It is scientifically proven that animals will learn a new behavior faster and more successfully if they are allowed to voluntarily participate in the learning process and are rewarded for correct behaviors. Families have the best relationships with their dogs if they act as kind, benevolent influences for the family and help their dogs understand their role in the household. Dogs feel safest and most confident knowing their pet parents are making the decisions and setting boundaries. Puppies that work for all the good things in life are more confident, attentive, polite, respectful and connected to their family.



Developed with and approved
by a qualified veterinarian.

Jumping up on people

While that puppy may be absolutely darling as they hop up and down on your leg trying to get your attention, the same behavior in a 70 lb. adult dog could not only be scary but downright dangerous to small children and frail adults. Habits developed in puppyhood can be difficult to change. Start young and don't allow the puppy to jump up on you.

Jumping up on you is a perfectly natural behavior, stemming from the dog's desire to sniff your breath and lick your face in greeting. Because this is a natural and instinctive reaction, it is best to replace it with another behavior rather than simply trying to stop it altogether.

Try teaching your dog to sit when greeted. "Sit" works well because if they're sitting, they can't jump. Keep treats handy while they're learning so you can reward them when they make the appropriate choice. Teach them to sit any time and any place you ask them to, not just at the front door.

Try folding your arms across your chest and don't look at your dog; turn away from them, ignore them and walk away. If walking away just revs them up more, stand your ground and wait until they quit jumping (eventually). Then, cue them to sit and follow this with a praise.

Practice in different places and with lots of different people. Have your dog on a leash so you can keep both your dog and visitors safe. Train them to sit-to-greet in many social situations. Practice asking them to sit-to-greet while you are in a chair, while you are laying down, in the backyard, at the park, etc.

Excessive barking:

Barking is so self-rewarding that your dog can easily slip into the habit. Pet parents may accidentally train their dogs to bark by rewarding the dog with attention when they are barking.

Figure out why and when your dog barks. If your dog can see through slats or holes in

your fence, they may react to every person, car or bird going by and will run the fence line barking. They think they have successfully chased them away. All that stimulation with no interaction causes frustration and results in more barking. A solid fence that blocks their view may cut the noise somewhat, but a better solution might be to bring the dog inside or build a separate dog run away from the action.

A similar scenario happens when someone comes to your front door. The visitor leaves, and the dog believes they have successfully chased them away. To stop this, recruit a friend to come to the door repeatedly. Praise the dog for barking a warning then redirect to another behavior, such as sit. Keep a leash by the front door and ask your dog to sit while you open the door. Usually by the third try, the dog starts to understand and sits much more quietly. Make it a game, rewarding your dog with a treat before they get up.

Does your dog bark at you? When they were a puppy, you may have teased them with a toy and thrown it for them when they started barking at you. You've trained them to get what they want by barking! They can recognize from your body language that you are fixing dinner (or leaving the house or getting ready for a walk). Desensitize them to those actions. Go through all the motions of fixing their food and then walk away without giving it to them. Don't return to feed them until they stop barking. Use similar methods to reduce or end barking at other activities, such as going for a walk, leaving for work, etc. Make sure not to reward their barking, especially by yelling at them. That's just barking back to them as far as your dog is concerned.

If your dog barks while you are at work, try leaving them indoors in a crate while you are gone. They will learn to relax and go to sleep instead of feeling like they have to protect their territory. Once they are reliable indoors (they are house-trained and won't chew because of anxiety), you can leave them in one room or let them loose in the house. Leave

the TV, radio or even a recording of your voice on to comfort them and mask outside noises. Close the curtains to block their view.

Have an exercise session before you leave and leave them with a wonderful chew bone or toy to occupy them while you are gone. Start by leaving for short periods of time, gradually lengthening the time as they get used to being alone.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please contact your veterinarian.