



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Canine Master on Pet Life Radio - Episode #13 Why Dogs Jump and How to Stop It

LISTEN TO AND SEE SHOW NOTES AT: www.caninemaster.com/13

Welcome to Canine Master on Pet Life Radio. Today on the show we're going to talk about jumping, when dogs jump all over you and your friends and your family and your guests at the door. It's one of the most annoying behaviors. It's one of the most requested behaviors I get asked to fix on a daily basis by my clients. And today, we're not only going to explore why the dog jumps, but how we can effectively stop this behavior, not just temporarily, but for good.

You know, I don't think I've had a client in recent years that hasn't needed help in correcting some form of jumping. Whether it's when they're greeting, when they're jumping on the kitchen counter, when they're jumping on children, when they're just jumping, just to get attention. Most of the time it's just what we call a greeting behavior, but sometimes the dogs will jump up because it's the role that they think that they need to assume in your pack. Sort of like, what they do is they come up to you at the door, or a guest, and they actually jump up and sort of pin you. We're going to talk about the different reasons why dogs jump and how we're going to fix it.

I will tell you another thing, I think it's a good place to start here is why. Why do the dogs jump and what's the reason for them jumping? Well, one of the reasons is that they're just plain excited to see you and interact with you. Puppies, or a dog, has this amazing sense of smell, and they're really curious to get a read on where you've been, what's going on, how you're feeling. What did you eat today? So many times when a dog jumps on you when you come home from work or been out of the house, is that they're actually trying to gather data. Like, all right, what did you have for lunch? So they jump up to smell your face and smell your mouth.

They may also smell your, sorry to say this, your crotch area, which also carries a lot of scent and a lot of information. So smelling the crotch area is actually what dogs do all the time with each other, and it's considered a friendly greeting is that butt sniff. So, if your dog is going to that area, that can be annoying as well, and of course that's not jumping up, it's just another thing that they're doing. When a puppy or small dog wants to get to that area, they have to jump up, and since we tend to cover our clothes with these areas, they have to sort of get in there and that gets really, really annoying.

Another reason why dogs jump up is they actually are going for attention. Attention is interpreted in different ways with a dog. Sometimes negative attention that you see as negative, is actually positive attention to the dog. When a dog jumps up on you, they're jumping up and you say, no, off, Chuckles, get down. No, stop it. Well, the fact of the matter is, in the dog's mind, you're saying Chuckles, blah, blah, blah, blah. No, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. He doesn't understand what you're saying. He just sees that you're saying his name, you're paying attention to him, you're pushing him, you're touching him, and actually, it's working. So inadvertently, sometimes, when the dog is jumping up on you, you're actually saying things to the dog and the dog is getting all this attention. So paying attention to the dog when he jumps up on you, I'm going to tell you, is probably one of the first things not to do.

I tell kids, when a dog is jumping up on them, to cross their arms and to actually spin, not fast, but slowly turn away, turning their attention away from the dog until the dog has all four paws on the ground. For better, for worse, I will tell you this, when a dog jumps up on you and we're starting to imprint to the dog that jumping up is not something we want them to do, what I would tell my clients to do is ignore the dog. Don't look at the dog. Don't talk to the dog. Don't put your hands on the dog if you don't have to. And wait to all four paws are stable on the ground and now bend over and give them a pat and pet them and pay attention in a calm way. If you get very excited, what's going to happen? If you start talking to them in a very, oh my God, hi Chuckles, how are you? He's going to get more excited, he's more likely to jump up. So, be calm upon your greetings, and when you greet him, only pet him when he has all four paws on the ground. If he goes to jump up, stand up and stop the attention, wait until all four paws are on the ground and then go back there again and pet him again. This works incredibly, incredibly well.

But it may take a little bit of time, this technique, because what happens is that you cannot actually control the behaviors of a friend coming over to the house. I can't tell you how many times I hear, oh don't let the dog. Don't pay attention to him when the dog jumps on you. And I hear my friends say, I don't mind. I don't care. I have dogs. I go, no, no, no. You don't understand. You're paying attention to the dog and you're touching him and you're rewarding that undesirable behavior. So, again, by talking to them, or friends petting them, these kinds of things, you're actually rewarding it and so you don't want to pay any of that attention to the dog. I say, pretend it's like the invisible dog.

Another reason why dogs jump up on people is that it's a role that we have put them in. You see, remember, if we look at packs of dogs or even wolves or coyotes, the leader, or the dog that is the one who's more in charge, the leader is much more likely to greet strangers to the territory first. What they do is, is they go and check out because they're the most experienced. They determine who's friendly and who's foe. So the leader, what he'll do is, he'll run up and he will be in front and the rest of the pack will stay behind the leader to gain that security. And if an underling actually comes near the leader when he's checking out another dog, or a stranger to the pack, the leader will actually correct the underling and say, get back behind me, I've got it covered.

You know, a lot of times you may even see this behavior with your own dogs. Have you ever walked by a car, you may have seen this with another person's dog, and you walk by a car and there's two dogs going absolutely bananas barking at the window trying to get to you,

ferociously, that seems. And then the dog in front turns around and almost attacks the dog that's next to them. A lot of people would have said, oh, that's displaced aggression. Well, actually, it's not displaced aggression. It is actually that dog saying, hey Buster, get behind me. I've got it covered. It's an instinctual thing that the dog in front is in charge of the decision-making process and he determines who's friendly or foe.

This actually happens when somebody comes to your house. Ding dong, the doorbell rings, your dog runs to the door, and what is he going to do? He's going to run up there first. Where should he be? In actuality, if you're the leader, which you should be, the dog should be behind you. It's your job to determine who's friendly and foe. And it's your job to determine if you should let the person into the house or not.

So, if the dog is in front of you, he's much more likely to jump up and he's going to jump up by elevating himself. He's going to elevate himself because, as he rises up, he's actually becoming a little bit more dominant. I hate this word dominant, but it's actually true. There needs to be a dog, it's not one man, one vote, when it comes to dogs there is a hierarchy of some sort. And of course, to many trainers out there, hierarchy is a bad word because I think it's been abused. But I do want to say that there is this sort of, everybody needs a leader. Everybody... I need a leader. We all need leaders. Leaders make us feel more comfortable. And so the leader is in charge of checking out the stranger and then the rest of the pack will actually accept the underlings as they come in.

So, when you go to the door and your dog is in front of you, you're putting him in a position of saying, hey, Chuckles, you're in charge, you figure out whether this guy should come into not, and what will Chuckles most likely do? He will elevate himself. He'll jump up and he'll probably jump down. And then he'll jump back up again and then jump back down. And the reason why he's doing that is he's a little bit conflicted in his role. Am I the leader? I jump up. No, I'm not the leader. No, I'm not, I'll jump down. Am I the leader? I jump up. No, I'm not the leader. And if he's a submissive dog, when the person bends over to pet him, sometimes we'll get what we call submissive urination. And that's where the dog's saying, I'm no threat, I didn't mean to.

What I tell people to do is, if you have a dog that does submissive peeing, if you have a dog that tends to jump up, is to actually win the space at the doorway. And what does this mean? Well, when you go to the door, you're going to teach the dog, hey, I go first. Now remember, we're activating an instinctive response. They probably learned this from another dog, or from their mother, or their littermates. The more dominant dog greets first. You'll see this over and over again.

So what I tell people to do is to use the good old body pressure. We've talked about that on previous shows. You're going to give a little guttural tone when he comes to the door, ahhh ahhh like guttural tone, that instinctive sound. And you're going to put some, what we call, forward body pressure on the dog, and you're going to actually use your legs, not your hands, because if you bend over that far, you're putting too much body pressure. Just use your legs to shove the dog out of the entrance way and push him back over the threshold to your foyer or wherever that line is that's a natural spot where they'll get the dog out of that entrance. You are going to own the area around the door.

What I tell people is, try to push that dog back at least six to eight feet. And sometimes I tell people, with a very forceful dog, you got to be almost be like a linebacker. Your forward body language, you're leading with your head, and you're shoving the dog, using your legs. We're not kicking the dog here folks. Be very clear. You're just shoving the dog, using body pressure, until he gets back. Now you start walking back to the door.

When you walk back to the door, put your back to the dog. You want to expect the dog, you want to have that body pressure of, I expect you to stay behind me. If you back up, facing the dog, you're actually giving... sort of like you're saying to the dog, am I strong enough here? Am I the leader? You're sort of asking his permission. But when you put your back to the dog and you walk back to the door, you give the body language of, I expect you to stay behind me. I am the one in charge of this decision. So, if the dog starts coming back again, you look over your shoulder, again, ahhhh, guttural tone, forward body language, and shove him back again.

Now, all the time you have somebody sitting at the door and you haven't even opened the door yet. I try to set up these situations, getting a friend or a family member to ring the doorbell. And that's the best way to teach the behavior. And you win that entrance when the doorbell rings. Once you do this a few times, three to four times, you'll find that your dog actually stays back. It's much harder. Now, some people would say to me, why don't we just teach the dog to do a sit stay? You know what, that's much, much harder than doing the technique I just told you. Because, by doing the technique I just told you, you're activating a natural canine instinct, and it works very, very quickly. Again, it may take three or four times, but instinctively, you're telling the dog, I've got it covered. I'll check out the stranger at the door. And if I have to, I'll jump all over him. Kind of. Not really. But that's the idea.

Okay, so, now we let the person into the house. They come into the foyer, you talk to them, dog starts to come up to greet. Again, ahhhh, forward body language, use your legs if you have to, and shove them out of the foyer. Pretty soon the dog is going to figure out that you have won that foyer and that you're in charge of that process. Now, a strange thing is going to happen. When you tell the person, come on into the house, what you'll find is, is that that greeting response that the dog would normally do is over. The dog has now realized that you have done that greeting and he's much less likely now, at this point, to jump. As a matter of fact, I find that 75% to 85% of the time they don't jump after the person has come in. Once you win that greeting and you own the space around that front door, when a person comes in, you will find that the greeting of jumping is gone from your dog for good, and it works incredibly, incredibly well.

All right, let's talk about some other reasons why dogs jump up. Dogs jump up because a lot of people encourage them to jump up. Sometimes we have somebody in the household, and we call them the anti-trainer, who actually encourages their dogs to jump up. So it may not be you, but it might be your spouse, or one of your kids, or the nanny, or somebody who is actually sabotaging your training programs. It's really, really important to get everybody in the household on the same page. It is not acceptable for a dog to jump up, on anyone, and I really don't care the size of the dog, you may find it cute, but it actually can be annoying. A dachshund jumping up on an adult is probably not going to do any harm, but a dachshund jumping up on a small child will knock them over.

And listen folks, here's another thing is, I can tell you more times than I know of where there have been lawsuits of a dog jumping up on an individual. They didn't bite them, but they may have scratched them, and they're getting a lawsuit saying the dog bit me. But in fact, the dog didn't bite them at all, he just jumped up. But it's really hard to tell a judge, well, that is a scratch, it's not a bite, and I've been tormented and I have all this emotional trauma now and I'm suing you for \$30,000 because your dog just jumped up on me. So jumping up is just a bad behavior that we truly do not want to encourage in any way, and it's important again, that everybody is on the same page.

We talked a little bit earlier in the show about winning the entrance at the door. Well, that's all great, but one of the things we also need to do is, once the person goes and greets the dog, we actually want to teach an incompatible behavior. Now you'll hear a lot of people talk about this, but a dog can't be jumping upon greeting if he's been taught to sit upon greeting.

What I tell people to do is, once you've actually won that entrance at the door, when the dog actually does finally approach the person, is to teach an incompatible behavior to jumping. And the easiest one is sit. So the dog learns that, in order to be pet and be greeted by the stranger, or by you, that he actually has to put his fanny on the ground and be sitting in that position, and then you go to touch him.

The first thing is, you've got to teach the dog the word sit. Not the default behavior, but the word, the actual cue. Once the dog is sitting, you say sit, or you have the stranger tell the dog to sit, and then the stranger goes to pet the dog. If the dog jumps up, arms come away, and then the stranger instructs the dog to sit again. Sometimes getting a friend to help you do this is really, really helpful. But that works incredibly well. Again, an incompatible behavior works incredibly well, but that's going to take a little bit of time.

But let's talk about when we might use a mild aversive. When we use aversives, or punishers, we really want to make sure that we actually never hurt the dog. That's really important. Nothing physically harms the dog. And one of the best mild aversives I know, that dogs don't like, is something called a squirt water bottle. It's almost like a water pistol. Dogs don't like it when they are sprayed on the top of the head and the ears. That's the best way to use a squirt water bottle. You can go to a store like Home Depot and get the plant misters. Again, pretty cheap. I like to write water only on this. And again, you don't always have to use an aversive, but I just want to tell you that this is how we do it.

If you have a behavior that's so well ingrained and you just can't get the dog to stop jumping, sometimes we do have to unfortunately resort to an aversive that is not going to hurt the dog. I take the nozzle until it's a stream of water, not a spray, and the punisher is going to be the water squirted all over the top of the head and the ears. But, you know, the best time to correct a dog is when the dog is actually thinking about doing the behavior, or in the act of doing. We've done studies, or know studies, that even one to two seconds after dog does the behavior, they have no idea what you're correcting them for, so you need to catch them when they're thinking about it or in the act.

That's when we need to use some sort of a marker word. A marker word that means this punisher is going to arrive very shortly. And this buys you actually time and distance. We

see this on a positive way when we use the clicker, the clicker marks the behavior as correct and then it gives you time to get to the treat, because we've paired the clicker with a treat. When we use a marker word, we use the marker word and we pair it with an aversive, or the squirt water bottle, and it works very effectively, and it buys us time and distance between the marker word and when we have to deliver the squirt water bottle.

What I like to use is the word enough or, that's it. You can come up with any words you want. It should be a word that you don't use very often and it should be said in a way that's very unique. So let's say we use the word enough. Enough means I'm going to go over, grab the squirt water bottle, and I'm going to squirt you six to seven squirts all over the top of the head and the ears. Your dog's going to hate it. That enough becomes my marker.

Okay, so how would we use it? So, we've won at the door, we've shoved the dog away. Now the stranger comes into the house and the dog goes to jump up. When he's in the midst of launching himself towards the person, you say enough, then you reach over and grab the water bottle and you squirt him all over the top of the head and the ears. It's really important that you don't have the water bottle in your hand when you say the word enough. And the reason for that is, is that then the dog will only obey you, or not jump up, when you have a squirt water bottle in your hand, and that would be pretty annoying, walking around all day long with a squirt water bottle. Don't have the squirt water bottle in your hand, put it on a table that you are able to get to within five to 10 seconds. You say the word enough when he's in the midst of launching himself, then go grab the squirt water bottle, chase the dog down, squirt him all over the top of the head and the ears and then you repeat. You do this over and over and over again until the dog gets it. And pretty soon, I would say, usually, pretty soon within about an hour, within one day, this dog is no longer jumping up.

I've seen some people get kind of almost cruel and sort of like trying to invite the dog up, come on Chuckles, jump up, jump up. You know. Somebody that he normally does this with. And you can do that, but I would just make sure that the dog is really clear why you are correcting him. Because, the worst thing you want to do when you're using an aversive is for the dog to be confused as to what behavior you're actually correcting. And that's why we like to use a marker word that marks it and gives you great timing, and it says, that's the behavior, it's like a picture, and now here comes the squirt water bottle. It might take some time and patience, but consistency on your part, doing it over and over again, usually works very, very, very well.

All right. Today we have some questions, I guess, Jaimee, from some of our listeners about jumping up.

Jaimee: Absolutely. This was a very popular topic. Our first question is from Jane from New Jersey. She says, "Hi Chris, I have a Border Collie named Bo, and he is so friendly and just wants to say hi to everyone he sees. I've been somewhat successful in curbing the jumping when I'm around, but I'm just not sure how to handle it when he is in the backyard playing with the kids and jumping up on them and their friends. Please help."

Chris: Well, here is a great technique, and we had talked about mild aversives. When you are having a dog that's jumping on people away from you, not near you, or maybe when you're not even in the yard and he's jumping up, you actually have to set up the situation.

What I tell my clients to do is we actually will put the dog out in the yard, we'll have some people come by that are previously set up and say, "Listen, we want you to come to the yard and Bo is going to jump on you and I am going to be like a mad crazy woman, and I am going to say the word enough when he jumps up, from the window, and then I'm going to tear across the yard running with my squirt water bottle, and I'm going to squirt him all over the top of the head and the ears, and then I'm going to shut the door and go back into the house. And then we're going to do it again, maybe with some other friends."

It's the kind of thing that works incredibly well, but it's really important that it's a set up situation, and that previously you have imprinted the word that enough means the squirt water bottle is coming. And then you actually can buy you up to about 20 seconds, if you always follow it with a squirt water bottle.

And one of the things that you want to do is that, if you say the word enough, and let's say the dog stops the behavior when you say enough, do you still squirt the dog? The answer is yes. If you say enough, you must always squirt the dog, regardless of if he stops doing it. It's really important to follow through, and this way he won't ever test you later on.

Jaimee: Our next question is from David from Arizona. He writes, "Hi Chris, please help. I have a Boston Terrier named Lucy who, no matter what I do, cannot keep her front paws on the ground. She needs to jump and leap towards everything to explore and say hello, and it's almost easier to carry her everywhere so I can have control of her. Is it okay to carry her and how do I work towards fixing this?"

Chris: Well, that's interesting. My neighbor has a Boston Terrier that is a terrible jumper, and I've tried actually to give them some pointers, but to no avail. The dog is still a big jumper. I see this with the Boston Terriers, they tend to move so quickly. The dogs just, by the time you go to correct them, they're backing away.

Well, the first thing is, by picking the dog up, you're actually elevating the dog into a position of more of a leadership position or a dominant position. Again, I hate that word, but I got to use it. So what happens is, is that by lifting the dog up, you're putting them in the position that he's trying to get into anyway. So keeping them on the ground is much better. But keeping him behind you is really important too.

So what I tell people to do is, if you are walking in a park, and your dog is on a leash, when you go to greet a stranger on the leash, get the dog behind you, tell them to go into a sit. And they need to be about an arm's distance behind you, so I'd like to make sure they're at least 18 inches behind me. If the dog goes to get up, I turn, 180 degree turn from the stranger that I'm talking to, put a little body pressure on the dog and say sit, then I back out, and I talk to my friend again.

The interesting thing happens is that the dog, at that point, the greeting process is over. You have performed that greeting process, and by the time you say, okay, Lucy, come and say hello to the person there, you'll find that Lucy is actually much less inclined to jump. She's much better. Also, you can use the squirt water bottle. I sometimes will take a little squirt gun with me, and I'll set up the situation. But again, the instinctual way to fix this problem is to take over the greeting process away from your dog and teach your dog that you've got it

covered and that you are going to be the one who greets the person, not the dog, and it's not their role to do so.

I would give that a try. It should work pretty well for you.

Jaimee: Okay. Chris, this is actually a question I have because I work closely with you and your clients and I hear this all the time when you recommend these techniques. Often people say, well, you know what, I just use the word off whenever my dog jumps up, and I just say off, and the dog knows to get off. How do you feel about that?

Chris: Oh Jaimee, I know, I should have touched on this earlier. This is so important. I can't believe I missed it. Thanks for bringing this up, and thanks Sarah, for asking this question.

You know, dogs don't understand language. I know that's hard to comprehend, but dogs understand cues. So if every time my dog is jumping up on me, and I go off, off, and I'm pushing them down, inadvertently, I'm actually putting that behavior on cue. I'm saying the word right before the dog is about to do it, or in the midst of doing it. I'm shoving the dog down off of me, and in the dog's mind, what am I doing? I'm saying off as I jump, and you're kind of touching me, and you're paying attention to me, and you're looking at me, and you're actually rewarding the behavior of jumping up. So by saying off, off, down, down, get off me, you're actually making the behavior worse.

So again, the best thing to do, when we're starting off here, is to ignore the dog. The next best thing to do is to make sure that all four paws are on the ground. The next best thing is to actually ask the dog to do an incompatible behavior, such as sit. The other thing we want to do is, and most importantly, is to win that greeting, whether it's on a leash or at the door, you're in charge of the greeting process and the dog should be way behind you. If I need to use an aversive after all these techniques, I'm going to use a marker word, such as enough, or that's it, or whatever you're going to use, followed by a squirt water bottle all over the top of the head and the ears, and that should do it. It really does work well, and again, get to the cause and treat the cause, not the symptom. And what's the cause? The cause is, the dog thinks he's in charge of the greeting. Take that away and the whole thing goes away.

All right, that's it for today. And I really hope you found our show to be really interesting. I would love to know some more about your comments and have you join in the conversation, and you can always email me at chris@caninemaster.com. That's chris@caninemaster.com. And be sure to visit our website at caninemaster.com. Send me your videos and photos so I can see what's going on and I can help you with your dog. I'll do my best to get back to you as soon as I can.

All right, that's it from Canine Master. Where I will continue to help you master the relationship with your dog.