



Jumping “Four on the Floor”

Jumping is a major issue for most dog owners and one of the easiest behaviors to extinguish once the practice has begun and you stay consistent for your pup to follow.

The “practice” of jumping for your pup is part excitement and part reward. The reason for the excitement is obvious – you are home! The reward, not so obvious, is your attention – your attention in any form is a reward for your pup. And your pup is more likely to repeat a behavior that he is being rewarded for. So when you yell to your pup “GET DOWN” and push and yell and push and so on you have not only provided a lot of attention you have also created a wonderful game – pup jumps, owner “barks” in excitement and pushes pup down so the game can begin again! Woo Hoo what fun!

The steps for the “Four on the Floor” rule are explained below. These steps are the beginning processes to shaping a new, more acceptable, behavior. You will not, for the rest of your pups’ life with you, have to completely ignore him for five minutes every time you walk in the room. In order to change the behavior an impact needs to be made and that is losing your attention for the moment – not forever. Eventually you will be able to say “hi pup, I’m home” and reward your pup for staying on all four paws. Until then showing your pup what you do expect and rewarding the behavior you love will help him to understand your leadership skills.

1st upon returning home (or when guests enter) or even from brief separations. For the first five minutes of you arriving home there is no touching, no talking, and no eye contact. This begins to make the greeting calm – as your pup learns that he will get no reward or attention from you until he is calm - he will quickly learn to keep all four feet on the ground. Keep a jar of dog treats nearby so that you can reward all four feet being on the ground. Dogs are more likely to repeat what they are being rewarded for and your attention, no matter what form it takes, is a huge reward.

2nd as your pup does jump up turn your back to him, cross your arms, and walk away or stop the game that is in session and turn from him (no words are necessary turning away makes enough of an impact). As he comes to you and sits then he gets his reward/attention. The reward always comes during the behavior you are expecting.

3rd request your pup to sit before petting by you and/or strangers – it is a lot harder to jump when in a sitting position. Your guests, and all members of your home, will need to follow these rules as well to help in his training.

Most of all stay positive, if you feel you are getting frustrated walk away and begin again when you are calm. When training your pup always end on a successful and positive note. And above all have fun!

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