



Normal Puppy Behavior: Rough Play and Jumping

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Puppies are adorable little bundles of energy with a tremendous capability for fun. While puppies are cute, they are also an amazing amount of work. They need training to learn acceptable behavior and it is your job to teach them. Rough play and jumping is cute when a puppy is 8 weeks old but at fifty pounds, they are dangerous. Start as early as possible teaching your puppy the best way to get attention is to keep all four paws on the ground.

Jumping

Puppies can often hardly control themselves when they meet a new person or when you come home from work. It is adorable but it can be dangerous around small children or the elderly. You need to curb the behavior early to keep from having an adult dog that jumps.

- Praise your puppy when it is calm. If it only gets a reaction when it jumps, it will keep jumping to get attention. Teach your puppy to sit when greeting people.
- Wait to greet your puppy until it is calm. If it is jumping when you walk in the door, walk straight to another room and allow the pup a few minutes to calm.
- If the puppy picks its feet up off the ground, say "uh-oh" and give it a timeout. A timeout is a short period of time in social isolation. Use a covered crate or small bathroom to confine your dog for 10 seconds and let it out. Give your dog a chance to repeat the same mistake. The puppy will never learn not to jump if you don't give it a chance to learn. You can give multiple timeouts in the same day for jumping.
- Make sure the whole family knows what is expected if the dog jumps. Do not expect young children to teach the dog to not jump. They do not have the strength or size.
- Redirect your dog when it meets new people. Entice your dog with a treat held at nose level and ask it to sit. Keep feeding it to keep it in the seated position.

Rough Play

Rough play between people and puppies will encourage the dog to be hyper. Wrestling and teasing the dog will make your dog more likely to jump and nip. Instead of wrestling with the dog, teach him new tricks or play games with him. See handouts "Enrichment Activities for Dogs" and "Games, Games, Games!"

- Never try to get your dog to bite or jump. The dog will not learn when it is acceptable to jump and when it is not. You don't want your adult dog jumping on small children.
- Praise and reward the dog for laying quietly and chewing on a bone. Teach the dog to lay on its bed and work on a Kong or long-lasting bone.
- Give your dog lots of positive outlets for its energy. Walk it at least once a day and play fetch or other games with it. A tired dog is a good dog.
- Make sure your dog is not being teased through the fence. Neighborhood kids can make your dog mean by daily abuse. Keep your dog inside where you can watch it.
- Try to stay calm when your dog is getting hyper. Your energy will transfer to your dog. Put it on a leash and practice "puppy push ups" (a series of sits and downs).

Jumping and rough play are normal parts of puppy development. To keep these habits from becoming permanent in adulthood, you must work on them now. Get your puppy some well-socialized adult dog friends to help teach it appropriate behavior. These habits do not have to continue if you are patient and consistent. Consult a behaviorist or join a puppy class for additional help.