

Jumping on Furniture



Most dogs will at some time or other want to sit on the couch with you, or sleep in that comfy armchair. If that is not what you want, then you should explain that to your dog as soon as he arrives in your home. It is easier for your dog to learn the rules if you have them in place from the start, rather than changing them as he grows up from cute puppy to muddy teenager!

Like with all other behavior modification programmes, teaching your dog not to jump up on the furniture is not about punishment, but about explaining the rules. Dogs are not stupid. Seeing as you are the one with the opposable thumbs that can open the dog food bag or can, the owner of the car keys to take him for a drive and a walk, and in general his favourite person in the whole world, once he understands what you want, he will usually be happy to oblige. If you want to, he can

even learn that one chair or sofa is ok, but another one is not. If you want to, he can also learn that if his special blanket is on the chair, he can sit on it or sleep on it, but if the blanket is not there, he can not. He can even learn that it's ok to get up on the sofa if you invite him first, but not in any other circumstance. What is important here is that you are 100% CONSISTENT.

MANAGEMENT

To start with, do not let him into the room with the coveted furniture unsupervised. If you do, he has a chance to “practice the unwanted behaviour” and that is what this step, Management, is all about preventing. Practice makes perfect so opportunities to practice undesirable behaviours must be avoided. Help your dog to be successful by not giving him a chance to practice any behaviours that you don't want him to get good at! To help with this step, you can close the door, put a table or a few expen panels in front of the furniture, or lay a chair on the seat so that there is no room to jump up.

YIELD (Compromise)

If appropriate, you can appoint an old armchair as “the dog's chair” and whenever he goes to jump up on anything else, encourage him to this chair instead by using food rewards. You can hide treats or place favourite toys in that chair. Teach the children that when the dog is in this chair, he must be left alone and in peace.

WHAT TO DO

When your dog jumps up on the sofa in your presence, calmly encourage him to get off, or remove him quietly. You can lift off a small dog SO LONG AS THERE ARE NO ISSUES WITH PHYSICALLY TOUCHING OR PICKING UP THE DOG. You can also lure him off with a treat. Lead him to an appropriate place, like his bed or other place where he is allowed, and *give him the treat there*. Do not be rough with him, as this may trigger defensive reactions, inc growling or biting, and it may teach him to be aggressive. Be very calm and gentle about the process. For EVERY time he jumps up, you remove him. In the end, your dog will give up, so long as you are 100% consistent. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WHATSOEVER MUST YOU LET CHILDREN try to remove the dog from the furniture!

Before he gives up trying to get on the furniture, he may start trying harder and jump up more stubbornly! It's almost like he says “Darn it, it worked before!” Often the dog will need to go through this so-called “extinction burst”, before he gives up. This is normal, and it is actually a sign that what you are doing is working. Congratulate yourself, and continue to be patient and consistent through this process!

NO CORRECTIONS!

If you simply punish the dog for jumping up on the furniture, you might create a dog that guards the sofa against you. He might also decide to only jump up on the furniture when you are not there. When you are away, there is nobody to punish him for sleeping on the couch, so it's obviously ok, right? Be aware of, or ask your trainer about, the risks associated with using punishment.

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