

# **BRIDGEWATER VETERINARY HOSPITAL**

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## **JUMPING UP: TEACHING CONTROLLED GREETINGS**

Three main treatment modalities alone or in combination work best to control jumping behavior: withdrawal, control devices (leashes and head collars), and teaching an alternative behavior such as “sit” or retrieve.

- **Withdrawal:** Remove any inadvertent reinforcement for the behavior by ignoring the dog and withholding all interactions until the dog is calm.
  - The person should stand calmly, turn away from the dog with arms crossed and no eye contact until jumping ceases; in cases where the dog persistently jumps, the person may need to walk out of the area, closing a door.
  - Once jumping has stopped, the person can return attention to the dog and calmly interact with the dog but should cease interaction if jumping begins again.
  - People should avoid rewarding the jumping with interactive responses such as pushing the dog off or yelling.
- **Increasing control and using control devices:**
  - Head collars greatly facilitate owner control and the ability to restrict jumping by providing control of the head. Pulling up and guiding the dog into a sit will stop the dog from jumping up.
  - Visitors can be greeted outside or inside with the dog on a leash and head collar, or the dog’s access to the situation can be restricted by placing it in another room until the visitor is seated.
- **Teach “sit” and “stay” as an alternative method to greet people.**
  - When the dog is calm and relaxed, practice sitting for a food reward in different areas of the house with the dog wearing a leash and head collar.
  - Begin with short sessions of 3–5 minutes with 8–12 repetitions per session.
  - Use highly palatable food rewards cut into small pieces.
  - Add the word “stay” when the duration of sitting is a few seconds; take a step away, return to the dog and give the food reward.
  - Build up the time away from the dog to 1–2 minutes.
  - Repeat exercises near the door and with the addition of leaving and returning.
  - Next ask the dog to sit for a food reward when returning from work or other absences of a few hours’ duration.
  - Familiar visitors can enter, ask the dog to sit, and give a food reward.
  - Alternatively, the owner can reward the dog for remaining seated as people enter also using the head collar and leash for control.
  - Eventually the food rewards can be reduced to intermittent use.
- **Some dogs remain too excitable to sit when visitors or even the owners enter the home. These dogs may do better if a ball is tossed as a visitor enters.**
  - This is more beneficial if a dog has been taught to sit prior to an item being tossed again.
- **In all situations, the owner should avoid increasing the dog’s excitement by walking calmly to the door and speaking in a quiet voice.**
- **Stepping on the dog’s toes or squeezing the paws should never be done; activities like these are cruel, often are ineffective at diminishing the jumping, and can lead to more problematic behaviors, including aggression.**

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