

Hyper Dog

The following article is taken from Dr. Ian Dunbar's *Hyper Dog Behavior Blueprint*.

It's a shame but if you ask most people, what they want from their dogs, they'll say to lie down and be quiet. Unfortunately then, adult dogs, adolescents and puppies receive considerable abuse for expressing their enthusiasm and exuberance. For example, trainers from the Force based training methodology recommend teaching a dog not to jump *up* by shouting "No" at the dog; squirting him in the face with water or lemon juice; swatting him on the nose with a rolled-up newspaper; yanking on the dog's leash; hanging the dog by his choke-collar; squeezing the dog's front paws; treading on his hind paws; kneeling the dog in the chest; or flipping the dog over backwards. One can plainly see these methods are a bit cruel for a dog that's just trying to say hello. Indeed, isn't it more likely to attract flies with honey rather than vinegar? Why not just teach dogs to sit when greeting people?

Be smart. Be kind.

Teach your puppy (or adult dog) to settle down and be quiet when requested and how to greet people in a mannerly fashion. Both dog noise and exuberance may be controlled and channeled into appropriate outlets.

Sit and Settle Down

Reward train your puppy or dog to come, sit, and lie down. Simple instructions such as "Sit" and "Lie down" are extremely effective solutions for nearly all doggy activity problems. Rather than telling the pup "No, no, no!" and "NO!" for everything they do that annoys you, simply ask them to lie down, and then praise and reward her for doing so. If she lies down obediently, she cannot run around the living room, chase her tail, chase the cat, hump the cat; jump on the furniture, jump up and down in the car, run out the front door, or chase and jump on children. Lying down and most behavior problems are mutually exclusive; your dog cannot lie down and misbehave at the same time. Take the initiative and direct your puppy's behavior by teaching them to lie down on request.

Rather than feeding your puppy or dog its entire meal from a bowl, measure out its dry food in the morning and use individual pieces as lures and rewards during lots of 30-second training interludes throughout the day. Practice in every room of the house, in the car (while stationary), and on walks. Pause every 25 yards and instruct your puppy to perform a series of body positions: for example, sit-down-sit-stand-down-stand. Within just a couple of days you'll have a totally different dog.

Simple reward training methods work wonders with out-of-control adolescent and adult dogs. Hold a piece of dry food in your hand but don't give it to your dog. Stand perfectly still and give no instructions; simply watch to see what your dog does. Characteristically, the dog will run through his entire behavior routine. Your dog will wiggle, waggle, circle, twirl, jump-up, lick, paw, back-up, and bark ... but eventually he will sit or lie down. Praise him and offer the piece of dry food or a tasty treat if you want this to go even faster as soon as they sit (or lies down-your choice), Then take a gigantic step a hop in any direction (to re-excite your student), and stand still with another piece of dry food or treat in your hand. Repeat the above sequence until your dog or pup sits immediately after you take each step and then begin to progressively increase the delay before offering the reward. Maybe count out the seconds in "good dogs" "Good dog one, good dog two, good dog three, etc." If your student breaks his sit while you are counting, simply turn your back on him, take a three-second timeout, and repeat the sequence again. In no time at all you will be able to count out 20 "good dogs" as your dog sits and stays calmly, looking up at you expectantly.

Move from room to room repeating this exercise. When walking the dog, stand still every 25 yards and wait for him to sit, then praise him and continue the walk. After hand feeding your dog just one meal in this fashion indoors and on one long walk with sits every 25-yards, you'll have a calmer and much more attentive dog.

Jumping On Guests and Strangers

Jumping up deserves a special mention because it is the cause of so much frustration. Right from the start teach your puppy to sit when greeting people. Sitting is the obvious solution because a dog cannot sit and jump up at the same time. However, it may initially be difficult to teach your dog to sit when greeting people because he is so excited that he doesn't hear what you say. Consequently, you will need to fine tune the training.

First practice sits (as described above) in locations where your dog normally greets people, e.g., on-leash outdoors, and especially indoors by the front door. Then invite over ten friends for a dog jumping party. Today your dog's dinner will be handfed by guests at the front door and by friends on a walk. After eventually getting your dog to sit to greet the first guest, praise your dog and have the guest offer a piece of dry food or treats. Then ask the guest to leave and ring the doorbell or knock on the door again. In fact, repeat front-door greetings until your dog greets the first guest in a mannerly fashion three times in a row. Then repeat the process with the other nine guests. In one training party you will probably practice over a hundred front-door greetings. Then ask all of your guests to leave one at a time and walk round the block. Put your dog on leash and walk around the block in the opposite direction. As you approach each person, instruct your dog to sit. Praise him when he does so and have the person offer a couple of pieces of dry food or treats. After five laps, you will have practiced 50 sidewalk greetings. Now your dog will be ready to sit to greet real life guests at home and strangers on the street.

Extra Energy Needs Attention

If you know your dog to be of the energetic nature be fair to the dog by making sure it has ample opportunity to let off steam in an acceptable way. Sign up for flyball or agility classes. Play fetch with tennis balls and soft flying disks like Frisbees, do yo-yo recalls (back and forth between a few people) in the park. Let them have "crazy time" by training the dog to jump for bubbles. Be creative and let your dog get its "ya-ya's" out. Remember a tired dog is a happy, calm dog.