



**METRO NASHVILLE**  
ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL

**JUMPY MOUTHY EXUBERANT DOGS**  
**ADOPTION / FOSTER TIPS**

Your new dog has been jumping up on people energetically and “mouthing” them. Dogs who jump up are either trying to play, to say hello or get attention! The jumping up is often accompanied by the dog’s mouth on the person’s arms and legs or leash. Usually the mouthing is painless as hardly any pressure is applied and is not done to do harm, but sometimes the mouthing can be quite uncomfortable.

If you follow the recommendations below, you will be able to teach your dog not to jump on people and mouth them. It is also important that your dog has opportunities for daily exercise and mental stimulation in the home, such as through puzzle feeders, chew toys, and training sessions to keep his brain busy.

Discourage unacceptable jumpy mouthy behavior. When your dog performs this behavior:

- Let the dog clearly know that you are not interested in this form of play.
- Turn your back, stand perfectly still, cross your arms and close your eyes
- If the dog does not give up, try a time out. (Either walk out of the room, crate/tether the dog and leave the room or yard)

Note: Some frequently recommended methods to stop jumpy/mouthy behavior such as “kneeing,” grasping the dog’s feet and squeezing, and grasping the dog’s muzzle or scruff often make matters worse. Many dogs misinterpret these behaviors as play and think that they are fun. As a result, the jumpy/mouthy behavior gets worse instead of better.

**TREATS:** Have treats with you. Treats usually motivate the dog to do what you ask and you can throw treats away from you on the ground to move the dog away from you if the dog is mouthing you.

**FREEZE:** When the dog starts to mouth, jump or bite at the leash, you should freeze and stop walking. Do not try to tug the leash out of the dog’s mouth – pulling on the leash rewards the dog for its inappropriate behavior with a game of tug.

**NO TOUCHING OR PUSHING:** Do not touch the dog or push at the dog when it jumps on you. Turn your back to the dog, cross your arms away from the dog, and stand still.

**SAY PLEASE:** Ask the dog for a “SIT”. The dog cannot jump/mouth and sit at the same time.

**STEP ON LEASH:** If all of the above are not helping, step on the leash to hold the dog down from jumping and stop it from mouthing while you regain his attention.

**LEAVE IT:** For dogs that grab, chew, or pull on the leash, use and teach the cue “leave it”. If the dog grabs the leash, wave a treat in front of the dog’s nose and mouth. It is very difficult for the dog to mouth the leash and sniff to receive the treat at the same time; the dog will likely drop the leash in order to get the treat. Add the cue “leave it” before you wave treat. Ideally, you should also teach the dog to ‘leave it’ during training sessions where the dog is not grabbing the leash.

**TOYS:** If the dog likes toys, try substituting a toy for treats. You can also have the dog carry a ball or toy in their mouth when leaving the kennel and on walks.

**DELIVER TREAT LOW:** If playing in the yard and the dog is jumpy, as the dog starts to come to you, hold the treat low at knee level, so as they come racing in they will stay on all four feet to get treat.

**BEHAVE CALMLY TO CREATE CALM BEHAVIOR:** Speak confidently, calmly, and quietly to the dog, and pet with long, slow strokes (as opposed to rapid patting). Your confidence and calmness can help to settle the dog. **Praise Calm Behavior**

\*Seek out a qualified behaviorist or dog trainer if the above is not working

**Resource:**

<https://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/dog-behavior/problems-and-management/jumpy-mouthy/>