



No Kill
South Carolina
2024

C H A R L E S T O N A N I M A L S O C I E T Y

DOG RESOURCES

JUMPY OR MOUTHY DOGS

Friendly, energetic, young dogs often display "jumpy mouthy" behaviors when they are excited. Jumpy mouthy behavior involves jumping up and mouthing, which may be soft or hard mouthing. Dogs may jump hard enough to knock you down, and they might nip at you and even rip your clothes. If you scream, yell, raise your arms, or knee them, they may get even more excited!

Why do they do it?

- They do it because they desperately WANT to interact with you, but they don't know how to do so in an appropriate way! This is very different from aggressive behavior: when dogs are aggressive, they do NOT want to interact with you-they want you to go away.
- Dogs may display jumpy mouthy behavior when they greet you, as a means of trying to play with you, or simply to get your attention.
- Dogs that are confined in a shelter may crave social contact, as well as exercise thus their behavior when they get out to see us may be over-exuberant. They may be very over the top (even obnoxious!) as they seek our attention. They simply do not know how to behave appropriately with us, but we can easily teach them!

What should I do when a dog is jumping and/or mouthing me?

- Be a tree: Cross your arms, turn away, and stand still.
- Be safe! Overly exuberant behavior can lead to injuries.
- Do NOT use punishment to correct the behavior--this is not effective and can result in fear and conflict, which will make the dog's behavior worse!

How can I teach my dog not to be jumpy mouthy?

- The good news is that jumpy-mouthy behavior is usually easy to train away! We simply teach them nice ways to interact with us that don't involve jumping and mouthing!
- PLAY with them in healthy, appropriate ways
 - Two (or more) identical toy retrieve is a great game to play (see back for how to do it!)





DOG RESOURCES

- Teach them to do something incompatible with jumping and mouthing and reward them for this (ie., teach them to sit, hold something in mouth, etc.)
- Manage underlying arousal/excitement
 - Be sure they get plenty of exercise and attention
 - Reward calm behavior
- Always, calmly turn your back on them and withdraw all attention from them (be a tree) when they display jumpy-mouthy behaviors. Playing with other dogs is often very helpful, but dogs must be introduced carefully to be sure they are compatible playmates Positive training classes may also help your new pet learn good manners!

Two identical toy fetch game

An easy and fun way to teach a dog to play fetch is to use the two-toy fetch method. Get two identical dog toys - plush dog toys or tennis balls or whatever the dog likes. It is very important that the two toys be exactly the same so the dog will like each of them just the same. If they are different, he will likely prefer one over the other, and this technique will not work!

- Offer the dog one of the two toys and let him play with it - don't take it away from him!
- Then, wave the other toy - he will likely drop the first one and grab the second one. Alternate the toys. You may playfully tease the dog to entice him.
- Next, begin tossing one of the toys - only a couple of feet at first. As soon as the dog goes to get the toy, call and encourage him to come back-run backwards to encourage him to follow you if necessary. When he reaches you, show him the other toy. He will probably want to get the other toy. He may drop the other one he has - or you can trade him for a treat. Then, throw the second toy. He will then run after it and you can start the process over again. Start slowly and build up over time.
- NOTE: Special toys designated for FETCH should be put away unless you are actually playing the game with the dog - this will help to keep them fresh and enticing, leaving the dog wanting more.

Family version

Use multiple identical toys. Stand in a circle and play a group version of the same game. The key is never to take the toy from the dog - let him/her come over and drop it as you wave an identical toy, and then immediately toss the one you have as soon as the dog drops the one they have!

In no time, your dog will learn to direct his activity and mouthing at the toy and





C H A R L E S T O N A N I M A L S O C I E T Y

DOG RESOURCES

not you. And, he/she will learn to love playing this game with you - and will come back to you for more appropriate play time!

Finally, once your dog is tired out, you can reward their calm behavior by calmly stroking/petting him and talking to them in a calm soothing voice. Nice job! Good dog.

Created by Maddie's Fund

