

HIGH AROUSAL DOGS (JUMPY/MOUTHY)

NEED MORE HELP?

Find additional resources at
pasadenahumane.org/behavior.

Some dogs get very excited and need a little help learning how to calm down. Dogs with high arousal tend to jump up on people and put their mouths on people's arms and hands in a friendly way. A dog typically does this when they are saying hello, trying to play, or asking for attention. Sometimes a dog may become aroused when they are stressed, but often they are young dogs who simply need proper training. Follow these guidelines to teach your dog not to jump up and mouth people. It's pretty simple! Encourage polite forms of play and greetings and discourage jumping and mouthing behaviors.

Encouraging Good Behavior

To encourage your dog, be sure to offer a treat and praise every time they do what you ask or when they show appropriate behavior without being prompted. Be the behavior you wish to see. It will be easier for your dog to stay calm if you do too.

- Fetch can be a well-structured game to entertain a high-arousal dog. Ask the dog to sit before you toss the ball or toy. Throw the ball and let them retrieve it. When they return, ask the dog to drop the toy (you can teach "drop it" by offering to trade a treat whenever they approach with a toy), then have them return to a sit before throwing it again.
- If your dog starts mouthing you while handling or walking on leash, keep a toy with you and offer the toy to redirect the mouthing.
- Make sure your dog is getting enough structured exercise time. Three to four walks a day is recommended, as well as playtime with you or play groups with other dogs.
- Have structured training time. The best way to manage high-arousal behavior is to keep the dog mentally busy. Leash training and obedience training will help teach good manners and strengthen your bond.
- Encourage calming activities and schedule downtime to help the dog learn when it is time to relax. Refer to the "Ways to Entertain Your Dog" worksheet.
- Crate train your dog! The crate can be a safe place for the dog to decompress during downtime. Refer to the "Crate Training" worksheet to make the crate a positive experience

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Discouraging Jumpy/Mouthy Behavior

- When your dog engages in mouthing behaviors, stay calm and try to redirect the behavior to something better. Ask for a “sit” and reward them if they do so. If they do not sit, try a toy. Toss it away from you and engage in structured play or training with the dog to interrupt the mouthing behaviors.
- A dog may need some downtime if they are having trouble settling. Give them a calming activity and put them in their crate.
- Do not scold your dog for their behavior. It’s likely to get your dog more wound up.
- Avoid wrestling or roughhousing games. This style of play may be too stimulating for your high-arousal dog.
- Do not knee the dog or pin them to the ground, as this could damage your relationship with your dog and make them fearful.

Remember: If you need more assistance, seek out a positive reinforcement trainer and inform them of your dog’s high arousal behavior.

We are always here to help! You can find additional behavior and training resources at pasadenahumane.org/behavior.

Adapted from Northeast Animal Shelter

