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Dogs jumping on furniture

Having your dog indoors is great, especially when they are calm and well-behaved! When dogs get excitable in the house and they run around jumping on furniture and even bench tops it can be pretty frustrating.

Although we have used the word 'couch' in the article it can be used to suit other furniture such as the bed, tables, chairs or possibly even the bench. Just keep in mind if it is the bench or table make sure you never leave valued articles there that would encourage your dog to keep trying (like food!) as some breeds (Labradors & beagles especially) can be ruled by their stomach!

Firstly make sure your puppy or new dog knows where to go and make sure ALL family members follow the house rules (often dogs jump on the furniture because a family member has allowed them or encourages them on the bed or couch and this makes training 10 times harder).

Make sure you encourage the dog to use their bed or allocated mat inside the house; teach them that this is where you would like them to go & this is where they get pats, treats and attention. You can move this bed or have more than one bed for them depending on where the family is at the time (they like to be around the family). Unless you have trained them where to go, it is unfair to be harsh with them if they are finding their own places to explore.

If you find your puppy on the bed or couch then calmly say 'no' and call them off as you walk toward the area you would like them to go. Keep the attention minimal and try not to 'bribe' with toys or treats. If you say no but remain standing still while calling them off you may be discouraging them from moving with your body language so be sure to start moving away as you call them off to the more appropriate area.

If a lead is needed then stay calm and use with caution so as not to cause fear or anxiety (which can lead to aggression). Speak to your trainer about slip leads as the lead can be slipped over the pup's head to provide extra encouragement to lead them to the more appropriate place.

If you need to discourage your dog from using the couch when you're out you may wish to crowd the couch with furniture, cushions or other items (such as boxes) over the next few weeks to minimise the frustration and try to break the habit. I have been known to use the washing basket and various bags & boxes (yes my own dog went through that habit for a short while when he was sleeping indoors... And it only ever happened after my husband decided to encourage him onto the 'old' couch in the shed as he thought it was nice they could cuddle up!) Some couches you may also be able to flip the cushion up as well. Just make it as unappealing and difficult as possible; especially for when you can't keep a close eye on him/her.

In regards to the bed; just close the bedroom door or block access with a child gate (a fantastic tool!) If your dog likes to sleep up high maybe consider a trampoline bed for them.

And lastly make sure your puppy or dog gets lots of exercise as best as you can. When a dog's drive & energy is fulfilled they are much less likely to misbehave. Most importantly remember that mental exercise is just as important as physical exercise; puzzle toys, finding hidden items and games can be a great way to wear your dog out. Keep an eye out for our seminar keeping your dog entertained which will be coming up in spring. And next month in this magazine will talk more about keeping your dog entertained.

Good luck!

Article by Sarah of Clever Creatures. For more information head to www.clevercreatures.com.au