

Dear Stephanie,

My 10 month old border collie is intensely friendly and affectionate and continues to jump up on us and anyone he meets which was cute when he was a little puppy but has now become annoying and sometimes dangerous as he knocks down my two year old daughter. Can you help?

Joanne B.

Dear Joanne,

Jumping up on people is a socially unacceptable behaviour and as you have discovered can be potentially dangerous. This problem can be solved if you practice the following with a dog of any size or age. As your dog approaches you, keep your hands out of the way and quickly lift your knee in front of you with your foot parallel to the ground and say "no" in a neutral tone. As he jumps up again repeat this exercise with the other knee. Each time he gets off you and has all feet on the ground, give him verbal praise but keep your hands out of the way as your hands may encourage him to jump up again until he gets the message.

You are NOT kicking your dog but you are allowed to protect your body. This stance is actually the "crane position" in martial arts which is a defensive maneuver. Teach this exercise to all the adult size people in your family pack and be consistent. For the smaller size people and upon greeting people on your walk have your dog on a leash and neck collar of your choice (one that is comfortable for your dog to wear and for you to handle) and just as your dog goes to jump up, pull the dog back on the leash and say the word "no" in a NEUTRAL tone. You could then have your dog sit but if he's a "wiggly" dog he can greet on all fours but watch carefully and correct him quickly before he lands on the person. Repetition, consistency and anticipating your dog's behaviour are your best friends along with a NEUTRAL correction system.

Stephanie Prewitt