

ACCEPTABLE DOG BEHAVIOR

Dogs are usually man's best friend, but they can also become a challenge if we don't teach them right from wrong. If you train your dog to adopt a certain behavior, don't be surprised if he actually follows that behavior. That cute little five 5 lbs. puppy is a lot of fun to keep on your lap and play with him there. But when he quickly grows to full adult weight of 120 lbs. within six months, you probably will no longer want him as a lap dog. Many times, the behavior we don't like on our dogs is the behavior we encouraged on them as a puppy.

1. **Jumping:** A dog can't distinguish between your good and bad outfits. He can't distinguish children, adults, healthy or infirm people, and he can't see differences between people who like to play with dogs, and those who don't. If you want to keep your dog from jumping on people, never let him start. Dogs jump up because they want to see you face to face. Get down to his level to greet him, and teach your dog that the only acceptable greeting is to sit and wait to receive a friendly pat.
2. **Furniture Jumping:** Your dog will not be able to distinguish between your old, worn out chair, and your brand new living room suite. You can't expect your dog to jump on one chair, while respecting the rest of the house. Decide if your dog will be allowed on all the furniture or none at all. Later, as your training progresses, you can teach your dog that one chair is ok for him to use, just like you taught him to go to the mat. **NEVER** allow your dog to become territorial over furniture.
3. **Food Disputes:** Remember that your dog is a member of your pack, and as such, he needs to respect other members of the family. It is best to teach your dog early when and where he is to eat. Do not allow him to beg food off the table, pick up food while walking, or any food that is not in his bowl; some could be dangerous to your dog's health. If your dog growls when someone approaches his bowl while eating, remove it. After a few minutes, return and feed your dog a few pieces of kibble at a time by hand, until all his food is gone. Repeat this exercise a few days later, until the growling ceases. Same rule applies for treats.
4. **Biting:** Teeth contacting skin must never be allowed. You never know when you will meet a stranger who will not appreciate your dog's nibbling on them and could get you into trouble. Puppies naturally nibble, their teeth are growing and it causes itchy gums. You need to provide plenty of toys for your puppy to chew on, and help him understand what he's allowed to chew on, and what he's not. This will help with his biting on furniture and other household and family items as well. If you catch him chewing on something he shouldn't, replace it with one of the toys he is allowed to bite.

5. **Running off Leash:** An untrained dog should not be allowed to run off leash. He could run into your neighbor's yard and could cause problems, or even worse, run into the streets and be run over by a car, or run away and get lost. A well behaved, well trained dog can be trained to follow you off leash, but you'd better be sure he's going to stay by your side at all times before you remove that leash.
6. **Barking:** Barking can be annoying to you and your neighbors. Barking is not always bad news, especially if you have a dog with a fierce bark. You can teach your dog to bark on command, and then teach him when not to bark. Read more about barking in your book, Home Training Issues, or the online article.
7. **Riding in the Car:** It is fun to take your dog everywhere you go (just make sure they accept canine companions). When taking your dog on a ride with you, put safety first. Make sure you restrain or restrict your dog so he will not interfere with your driving. Don't let your dog stick his head out the window; you never know what kind of debris could get into his mouth, nose or eyes. NEVER let your dog ride loose in the bed of a pickup truck.
8. **Kids and Dogs:** Be careful when you let kids play with your dog; dogs have personalities that may or may not be compatible with children. A split second angry response from your dog could cause a lot of damage on a child. Follow these guidelines until you are absolutely sure your dog enjoys playing with children. Do not let kids run at the dog or approach him from behind; this could scare the dog and create a defensive reaction. Running away from your dog could be an invitation to play chase and tackle. It's a good idea to control your kids screaming as well as the dog's barking. Your dog is not a plush toy; don't let kids pull his tail, ears, hair, etc. Don't let the kids tease the dog; it might be considered a challenge. Have a safe place where your dog can escape the kids.

Set your dog up for success by teaching and rewarding him for acceptable behavior. Expose your dog to all different kinds of people and situations, and he will learn to adapt.