

JUMPY / MOUTHY DOGS

The dog you are adopting is smart, playful, and high energy! During their time at the MD SPCA they passed their behavior evaluations and medical exam. They do get overexcited at times and often begin to jump up on and/or mouth the handler. Jumping and mouthing are common behaviors that occur in a shelter environment. These behaviors often occur when dogs have had an extended stay at a shelter and are not getting the regular enrichment, attention, training and exercise they would normally get in a home environment. They often seek attention by doing these nuisance behaviors and/or practice these behaviors out of frustration. This dog has shown improvement with training but will need additional training and management in a home environment. It will be especially important to respect and implement the recommended two-week decompression time to help with acclimation to their new home. **Here are some tips for dealing with jumping/mouthing behavior:**

1. Put up baby gates or a dog exercise pen away from the door to allow you or guests in the house while preventing your dog from mugging people at the doorway.
2. Try carrying a rope toy and high value treats (*hotdogs, cheese, meatballs, chicken*) on all walks to help with jumping and mouthing behaviors. Be mindful that sometimes added engagement with toys can spike a dog's arousal.
3. Work on teaching your dog a solid "Sit" with gradually more difficult distractions. If your dog jumps on you during this training then go back to the previous step where you were successful.
4. Have a leash and collar on your dog so if they become too excited you can prevent them from jumping/mouthing or lead them away until they calm down a touch. Keep in mind that restraining your dog with the leash can create more frustration and lead to worsening arousal. Be sensitive to situations which he has not been trained to handle yet and keep him in another room or crate instead.
5. Until your "Sit" is solid, you can get in the front door without any jumping by tossing high value treats on the floor as you enter. While your dog eats the treats they will have all four paws on the ground and will not be able to mouth you while eating.
6. If your dog is too excited to take food when you get home but loves toys you can walk in the front door and toss a toy away from the doorway to prevent them from jumping.
7. If your dog is hyper-motivated to greet you and is not interested in toys or food you may want to think about kneeling down while holding their collar so they can greet you without jumping/mouthing. Often this first greeting helps lower their frustration and excitement.
8. Gradually and positively teaching them they can be relaxed and happy when confined to a crate or ex-pen.
 - **Crate Games**
 - **Capturing Calm Behavior**: Build a reinforcement history for calm behavior by catching or "capturing" calm behavior when you calmly dropping treats for her anytime she settles and is not fixating on you or your treats.
9. This dog has had difficulty managing impulse control and arousal levels in previous homes – particularly when it comes to using his mouth. They will benefit from building an "off switch" in order to improve their ability to organically come down and settle.
 - **Impulse control games**: Games are used to reinforce alternative behaviors to jumping/mouthing
 - **It's Your Choice**: Waiting for wanted item gets you a reward