Training Greeting Routines

In this report we’re going to focus on what is probably the most important thing your dog could ever learn: How to greet people calmly and in a way that’s not disruptive.

And by greeting people, I mean ALL people and in all circumstances. This includes greeting you when you come home from work, when your kids may walk into the room or even when you’re saying hi to your dog in the morning when you wake up.

Let’s face it. Dogs like people. And they get excited when people come into the room; sometimes, too excited. This causes dogs to then do stuff we don’t want them to do, like jump up on us, or excessively sniff us, nudge our hand for a pet or a bunch of other annoying behaviors.

And I think if we get right down to it, if we could just get our dogs to be more calm and relaxed instead of hyped up in these over-stimulating situations, we’d fix all sorts of problems, not having to kick our dog outside because he’s being bad and instead having him indoors enjoying your company.

The exercises I’m going to go through in this report will make every other area of your dog’s life more simple. They may even make the difference between you never getting your dog under control and having to get rid of him.

Dogs who don’t know how to greet people appropriately are embarrassing. Nobody likes hearing their doorbell ring and having it set their dog off like the world’s going to end, then have the dog trying to barge his way past your legs as you crack open the door to let someone else in… yelling at the dog the whole time.

Luckily, it just simply doesn't have to be this way.

There are simple things you can train your dog to do in over-stimulating situations that can have him behaving perfectly. So that when he hears that doorbell ring he runs over to a designated spot like his bed, or mat and waits eagerly while you open the door and let someone into your house… and to have your dog obey so well that you can even take a new guest and walk him right by the dog laying on his bed without having the dog get up. And, have him staying there until you release him for a tasty treat.

It may sound so wonderful and far fetched to even believe, but it’s possible, and can be taught to your dog over the course of the next 14 days.
But that’s not all we’re going to cover in this report, we’re also going to cover some quick-fix strategies for how to train your dog to no longer jump up on you, even if your dog jumps on you so hard it practically knocks you over.

We’re instead going to show you how you can take a dog, for example, that is so aggressive in his jumping that if he sees you grab something he wants, like a ball, he’ll sprint at you full speed and jump at your chest... but to be clear, this is the kind of jumping that’s NOT being done with teeth bared and aggressive, but just WAY over-excited to get his ball.

Some dog owners I’ve known have had big 100-pound dogs with this type of problem jumping up when they get excited, clap, laugh, play with their kids, or hold a toy their dog really, really, really wants. Sometimes the jumping is so strong, that it physically knocks them over.

So if that’s the type of jumping up you’d like to fix, we’ll cover that in this report as well, in a way that never forces you to kneel your dog, yell at him or punish him in any way. We’ll just show you how to turn the tables on him and withhold certain things from his environment so he learns OTHER ways to ask you for them… NICE ways.

If you’ll read and re-read this report a few times, and do the two exercises I outline later on, your friends and family will literally wonder what you did with your other dog… and actually say to you “Wow! It’s like you got a whole new dog”.

**Why Your Dog Get’s Too Excited & How To Calm Him Down**

It is crucial that you understand all the little emotional triggers that are being set off in your dog’s brain that make him get out of control, hyper and jump up on you.

Only after you understand how the dog’s mind works can you take that equation, reverse engineer it and come up with a training plan that can fix the behavior.

In this particular case of working with dogs that you really want to be more calm, I want to share a strategy that the public school system has been using for quite some time to get their students to remain more calm that works just as well on dogs.

Where I went to school, we didn’t do all our learning in the classroom. Sometimes we’d go into the library, sometimes we’d go to the gym, the music room, computer room and a half dozen other places throughout the school.
And thinking back and reflecting on that experience or going back into a school and watching how the teachers keep their students calm in the hallways, as they walk from one room to another, I realize that they use a very simple strategy.

They have the kids walk in a line from their main classroom to some other room in the school. But that's not all they do. They also assign specific jobs to some of the students, often the more troubling ones. They'll have two students carry the lunches to the lunchroom if they're going to lunch, someone is put in charge of holding the door open so the line can go out the door easily, another kid is in charge of turning off the lights, etc., etc.

And the result is usually almost complete obedience.

Why does this work so well?

This strategy works so well because the kids are given a job to do. It's not a complicated job, it's just a job. A job that helps a kid stay focused on what he SHOULD be doing, instead of all the trouble he would rather get into - because an unfocused mind tends to wander.

Some teachers even have a reward schedule set up for how well the kids do their jobs to help motivate them and keep them in line.

It's not a perfect method, sometimes there's a kid who is always trouble, but that kid usually has a lot of other stuff going on in his life and is acting out. Maybe his parents are going through a divorce, or he's being physically abused. And it's only when you take that kid aside and fix those other areas of his life that he'll then be able to be obedient in school again.

And something else I want you to think about is that punishment doesn't seem to work well with the troubled kids. Those troubled kids simply hate their teacher more, or just get used to being punished. Think about it, did you ever really notice a kid stop picking fights when he got punished with detention? In my experience, they just got sneakier at hiding it from the teacher and better at not getting caught.

Now to wrap up this story, I want you to make one more comparison with me. I want you to picture the difference in how calm students are when they are walking in a line during school, compared to how wild and crazy those hallways get when school is let out and there's no structure in the hallways.

Do you see how providing structure and a set of rules may help keep people and even your dog from getting over-excited.

At this point, you may be saying to yourself, “That sounds great Chet, but how the hell can I translate this strategy over to my dog's life”
Train Your Dog a “Greeting Routine”

The process of giving your dog something to focus on when he meets new people is to train what I call a Greeting Routine.

A Greeting Routine is in reality a game that your dog learns to play in different situations. You can train many different kinds of Greeting Routines and you can have multiple different Greeting Routing scenarios.

A Greeting Routine is nothing more then giving your dog a job to do during a certain situation where you think he’d normally have a tendency to not behave appropriately.

The routine could be something like knowing he’s supposed to go lay on his mat when strangers come over. Or, it could be to walk over to all new people and touch his nose to their shoe. There are no set rules for the best routine to teach your dog. In fact, the job you give your dog to do during a routine may very well depend on your dog.

For example, my personal favorite greeting routine that I have my dog trained to do is to lay down on his mat when he hears the doorbell ring and wait there until I tell him “OK”. Giving my dog this job to do when guests come over has been the most impressive thing people coming over to my home say about my dog and kept my home a MUCH calmer place for visitors.

It keeps him focused, and even excited to go to his mat, and takes his attention off of annoying my guests.

But that might not be as effective for your dog. Different dogs might need different jobs to do when overly excited. Some dogs may find it next to impossible to avoid at least being able to see this mystery visitor that has knocked at your door. Or maybe you have a blind dog, and he really can’t be comfortable unless he smells a person first.

In this report I’ll be focusing on teaching your dog to lay on his bed or mat when people come over. It’s the behavior that is the easiest technical behavior to learn how to teach as it has fewer steps, but you can choose to adapt this strategy and choose another behavior to teach if your dog is struggling with this concept if you chose.

The important part about creating a Greeting Routine for your dog is that the routine is within the rules of your house and doesn’t bother people. Most people won’t be bothered by a dog coming over and taking a second to sniff their shoe. But they will be bothered by taking a second to sniff their crotch. The job needs
to be something that can last long enough for your dog to stop being so excited, as well as not be offensive to other people… those are the only two rules.

The 9 Steps to Training Your Dog A Greeting Routine

The process I’m about to outline is for training your dog to go lay on his bed when he hears the doorbell, and wait their calmly until told it’s OK to get up.

1. Click here to see how to train your dog to go to his mat.
2. Train dog to stay on mat for up to a minute at a time
3. Train dog to wait for a ‘release’ word by varying the length of each stay
4. Practice stays from further distances away from dog
5. Practice stays when dog can’t see you
6. Use temptation resistance exercise to “temptation proof” the stay
7. Switch cue to the doorbell with ‘Simon Says Method’
8. Practice with friends, neighbors and strangers

Exercises for Learning Each Step of The Process

**Step 1:** Before your dog can even have a prayer at learning how to do this greeting routine, he absolutely needs to know how to go to his bed, or mat. And, the best way I can think of for teaching you how to help your dog learn this skill is by watching how I taught my dog to do it. Click here to watch the video of me training my Golden Retriever to lay on his bed.

**Step 2:** After your dog knows how to go lay on his mat, you need to teach your dog to stay on his mat for at least a full minute at a time. This might take you several days to teach, so be patient. Aim for improving your dog’s stay by only 10 seconds a day for the first week.

To teach your dog to stay on his mat simply start counting in your head the second your dog goes over to his mat and lays down. For day one aim for getting your dog to lay on his mat for 5-10 seconds. Don’t try for more then this on day one. Then, and only then, say “Good” to your dog and toss him a treat.

**NOTE:** It is important that you only say good once during each repetition. Do not say good for laying on his mat the first time, and then say good again five seconds later; it will confuse your dog. It is better to simply increase the duration of time between when the dog lays down and you say good to train the stay.

Make sure you are standing right next to your dog when working on this behavior. You always want to work on the duration of a stay, before working on how far away you can stand from your dog and still get him to stay reliably. Trying to stand more then a few feet away in the beginning will likely be too much of a temptation for your dog and cause him to break his stay to come over to you.
During your first day try, to work up to a 10-second stay while standing less then three feet away from your dog. When he'll stay three times in a row for 10 seconds call it a day and try again tomorrow. Each day that you work on this behavior, you'll want to first warm up your dog and get him back into training mode. Most dogs will kind of forget most of yesterday's training and take 3-5 reps to warm up. When your dog seems to be catching on and remember how yesterday went, then try to get him to stay for 10 seconds, if he can't hold the stay that long, follow the same steps as the day before until he does. Your dog should catch on faster this time.

When your dog will hold a stay for 10 seconds, start increasing the time you require him to stay for 10 seconds every day you work with him for the first week until he will stay perfectly for 60 seconds.

Do not get discouraged, this is going to take you six days to teach.

Trainers Tip: Your dog will make mistakes during this process by getting up off his mat and coming to you. When he does, you need to quickly step in front of him and coral him back to his mat. You should say NO firmly the second you see him get up and then firmly place him back on his mat. You do not need to yell at him or punish him, just physically put him back on his mat. Do not drag him, just coral him. This is not a punishment, but rather a correction. He just doesn't know what to do yet, and we're trying to teach him in the most gentle way possible.

Step 3: One of the most common mistakes people make when training their dog to stay is falling into a predictable pattern that a dog can recognize. For example, if your dog knows that he has to stay for 60 seconds, then after 60 seconds if you don't give him a reward he's more likely to quit on you. Or even more common, if your dog knows he has to stay for 60 seconds, and your dog knows that ahead of time, he may decide that going off and seeing what's at the window is more rewarding then staying for 60 seconds.

In short, the dog still has too much power over how long he wants to stay. His decision to stay is based off of an internal clock and NOT off of you telling him it's "OK" to get up and get your reward now.

The best way to teach your dog to wait until you release him from his stay and NOT by counting down the clock in his head, is to always ask him to stay for different lengths of time.

If your dog never knows if you're going to ask him to stay for 5 seconds, 60, 15, 45 or any other amount of time, every second that he's staying still gives him HOPE that there's a reward. He'll start to get more excited about earning his reward the longer you ask him to stay.
In short, do not do this until your dog can reliably stay for 60 seconds; you need to train that behavior first. But, once he can stay for 60 seconds, start asking your dog to stay at least 10 times a day, and have each stay be a different length of time.

Practice a stay before you feed him, then before you let him outside, or as you put a treat on the floor you don’t want him to get, and wherever else you feel like trying. And also make sure you now start to vary the amounts of times you ask for stays when your dog is doing is training for going to his mat or bed.

Getting reliable stays to last past a minute is all about this principle and you can’t just jump right into asking your dog to stay for 30 minutes while you eat dinner. Start by asking for random amounts of time around a minute long, yet every now and then only asking for 10 or 15 second stays.

Slowly add in more and more LONG stays and continue to lengthen as your dog becomes more and more able to stay, until he will stay for five minutes. I would recommend doing this over the course of the second week of working with your dog on this stay command and increasing the duration of the longest stay you ask your dog for by one more minute a day. Not all of his stays will need to be for that longer time, but I’d make sure at least two or three were.

At this point you’re probably OK with backing up to no more then 10 feet away from your dog. This allows you to work on stays so you don’t have to stand next to him for five minutes, and can instead go sit at a table or couch during your training session.

When your dog is staying for five minutes you’re ready for Step 4.

**Step 4:** When your dog can hold a stay in a distraction-free environment for 60 seconds, you’re ready to start adding length. Remember, later on in this book I’m going to show you how to get your dog to stay laying on his mat even when strangers come up to your door and ring the doorbell, open the door and come in. And if your dog’s mat is a long way from your front door, you’re going to want to make sure you trained your dog to stay from long distances, and even when you’re out of sight.

To do this, simply continue asking your dog to stay for random lengths of time while you back up an additional 5-10 feet per day. If you’ll work on this every day, you should be able to get to the point where you can’t back up any further while in your home without leaving your dog’s eyesight. Set yourself a goal to get reliable stays after working on this for one week.

**Step 5:** After working on far away stays for a week, start leaving your dog’s sight for a few seconds. You’ll probably have to drop the length of time your dog is required to stay… possibly back down to 5-10 seconds.
Don’t let your dog cheat and get up. Sneak quick little peeks at him, or use a mirror or reflection to see if he gets up.

If you’re on linoleum, tile, or some other surface, you’ll be able to hear your dog’s nails if he gets up early.

The instant your dog breaks his stay too early, quickly swoop into the room and calmly return your dog back to his mat. Don’t yell at him, don’t grab him by the collar too hard, we’re not PUNISHING him. We just want to tell him “No” once, in a firm voice and return him to his spot. Then, repeat the repetition.

If your dog's getting up and breaking his stays too often, make it easier for him. Maybe you need to spend another day working where he can see you before you work on out-of-sight stays. Or maybe you’re asking him to hold his stays for 15 seconds and you should only be asking for 5-10 seconds.

Remember, as a rule of thumb, if you ask your dog to do something three times in a row, and he’s not getting it right, you need to lower the criteria, and make the behavior easier for him to understand what you’re asking.

YOU may think what you’re asking for is obvious, but as we’ve already talked about, your dog may not fully understand the cue and needs more practice.

**Step 6:** Now it’s time for what I call, Distraction Proofing!

Distraction proofing is the process of teaching your dog to hold that stay on his mat, even in highly arousing and exciting situations. For example, most dogs find chase incredibly exciting. Of course, not all dogs are this way, but usually a dog has something that gets him more excited then anything else in life. It may be food, it may be a tennis ball, a tug toy or a countless number of other exciting things.

What the exciting thing is doesn’t matter, the thing that matters is that you make sure you know what gets your dog excited and have it handy for this next exercise.

When you have that thing your dog really wants, you’re going to start offering it to him while he’s on his mat in a way that shows him, if you want this, don’t try and get it… the only way to have it is by staying on your mat.

Here’s how I did this distraction proofing exercise with my Golden Retriever.

For my Golden, one of the most irresistible things he simply can’t resist is to stand next to his bed while he’s holding a stay, look him directly in the eye and sprint as fast as I can away from him.
Some part of his genetic code just can’t resist the chase, and in the beginning he would break from his stay every time I did this.

So if your dog is the same way, I’d suggest trying this. Here’s how:

Cue your dog to stay, and then sprint away from him for 3-5 steps. As soon as your dog gets up to chase you, STOP, tell your dog “No” and usher him back onto his mat.

Repeat this until you can sprint forward for 3-5 steps and your dog will stay on his mat… then quit for 20 minutes and repeat. Don’t continue to tempt your dog for super long training sessions. What’s more important is helping him remember the lesson of NOT to chase you after 20 minutes.

Repeat this drill every day, until you can come back after 20 minutes, cue your dog to stay on his mat, sprint forward five steps and he stays the FIRST time. In the beginning, this will not be the case. Your dog will forget what he’s supposed to do and need a reminder or two before he knows he’s really supposed to stay, and can remember that lesson on his first rep of a training session.

I personally found that my dog figured out this lesson after three sessions on his first day, so this is not a hard lesson to teach your dog.

Step 7: Now, it’s time to integrate the doorbell into your stay on mat training!

We want your dog to know that he should go to his mat when the doorbell rings, and if he does, that all sorts of great goodies are going to get thrown his way!

This means that we need to CHANGE the cue for your dog to go to his mat from you saying, “Go To Your Mat”… to just the doorbell ringing. And you can do this by using a method that I call “The Simon Says Effect”.

Have you ever played Simon Says? The game where a leader of a group of people stands in front of everyone and says, “Simon says touch your head”. The way this game works is that you have to do everything the leader says to do, as long as he says “Simon Says” first.

If the leader of the game says to do something and doesn’t preface the statement by first saying “Simon Says”, and you do the behavior anyways… you’re out.

This game can be very difficult because the leader tries to get you in a rhythm. They’ll get you doing a lot of behaviors really fast, one after another after another, all the while saying Simon Says… and just when you get into the rhythm they throw in a behavior without saying ‘Simon Says’ and it throws a lot of people off.
And this same concept of getting your dog in a rhythm of doing a behavior for one cue, and then throwing in a different cue randomly, is exactly how you can get a dog cued to do a behavior to a different cue as well. To do this with your doorbell, take your dog’s mat, and place it roughly 10 feet from your front door. Practice how many times you can cue your dog to go to his mat and then toss a treat AWAY from his mat in one minute.

NOTE: Never feed your dog on his mat, because it doesn’t reset the behavior. Tossing a treat away from the mat forces the dog to get up to get the treat, and thus, resets the behavior so you can do more repetitions.

By practicing how many times you can get your dog to do a behavior in a minute, you’re aiming to get your dog to fall into a rhythm, where he’s not really paying attention to what you’re saying, but instead just doing what he thinks is the right thing.

The key is to have your dog in such a rhythm of going back to his mat that you don’t even have to give a cue and he’ll still go to his mat anyway. When your dog is at this stage, have someone ring the doorbell, and then say “Go To Your Mat” immediately after the doorbell rings. Your dog should catch on within several repetitions that the doorbell ringing doesn’t really matter because he’s more focused on his treats at this time. And keep practicing this until your dog gets back in the rhythm of going to his mat even if you didn’t give a cue, every time you ring the doorbell and tell him to go to his mat.

When your dog has gotten back into rhythm, it’s time to do the good ‘ol ‘Simon Says’ switcharoo on him. Simply ring the doorbell and DO NOT say “Go To Your Mat”. Most dogs will be in such a rhythm, they’ll do the behavior anyways.

Do this for another 10 repetitions and then stop and try again the next day.

When you repeat this training exercise the next day, your dog will most likely have forgotten that he’s supposed to go to his mat when the doorbell rings. If that’s the case, simply fall back and spend as many repetitions as it takes of ringing the doorbell and then telling your dog “Go To Your Mat” until he gets back into the rhythm of what he’s supposed to do and no longer needs the verbal reminder from you.

Each day you practice this, your dog will forget some of what he learned the previous day. Almost all training sessions need a little refresher session. But if you’ll practice this every day for a week, with your dog’s bed right by the front door, most dogs will start getting excited to lay on their mats when the doorbell rings to get a treat, instead of being focused on being territorial, nervous, anxious, fearful, overly excited, etc.
This is a perfect example of what I call “Trigger Transformation”, which is the process of taking something in your dog's life that ‘triggers’ a negative response and changing the internal feelings your dog has about that trigger into something positive... so that your dog literally goes from feeling worried, scared, or aggressive towards some things, into extremely happy to see those things.

If you’re interested in learning more about how to use ‘Trigger Transformation’ in other areas of your dog's life, like getting him to allow his feet, lips, and hips touched, or actually training him to be excited when small children pull on his tail... then click here to look into my advanced training program for dogs.

The final thing that I’d suggest doing for extra credit with this technique is that every day you practice this... move the mat a few feet away from the door, until you’ve moved it all the way into another room. This allows your dog to not be rushing towards the door when the doorbell rings, but AWAY from it.

It’s entirely up to you whether you want to train this or not, but I thought I’d at least recommend it to you, as it’s what I prefer.

**Step 8:** You may find that this step is not necessary and your dog catches on without having to go through this additional step. But, if your dog does not start automatically going to his bed and laying down when the doorbell rings, I’d recommend recruiting some help from your neighbors or neighbor kids especially.

And I’m talking about creating an environment where your dog can practice going to his mat with the doorbell ringing, with OTHER people ringing it instead of you.

Up until now, your dog was in training mode when you were ringing the doorbell, and it’s easier to remember what to do when you’re in training mode. That’s why I like to recruit the help of neighbor kids to come ring the doorbell a BUNCH over the course of a few days so I can get lots of practice in with my dogs.

I find kids are VERY bribable with candy, and it’s MUCH easier to ask them to come over and ring our doorbell ten times in an hour, than it is to get their parents to do it.

If you asked kids to come over and ring the doorbell once every five minutes for an hour, and did that every day for a week... I promise you’re going to impress the living hell out of all people who come over to your house from now on. They’re going to walk into your home and see your dog lying on his bed waiting for you to release him. He won’t be sniffing their crotches, he won’t be barking at them, and you’ll look like a dog training genius.

And, when they ask you how you managed to train your dog to do this ‘Greeting Routine’ thing, don’t hesitate to put in a good word for me and this book ;-)