



Introducing dogs to visitors ...

Introduction

Some dogs do not like visitors coming and going, this can be because they are guarding their territory or more often because they want to get attention. Introducing people in a controlled way should help overcome most of these problems.

Before your first visitor

It is best to start by teaching them what you expect them to do when visitors arrive. Enter the room and ignore them completely. This means no touching, talking or eye contact.

Just sit down quietly and continue to totally ignore them. If they jump up or bark, continue to ignore them. If they do jump up then make it impossible for them to sit on you, folding your arms and legs usually is enough.

Once they have given up and gone away (which they will, just be patient), wait five minutes and then call them. Give them a tasty treat and few words of quiet praise then go back to ignoring them. If they get very over-excitable, put them out of the room.

After 10-15 seconds open the door and continue to ignore them. If they are still excitable, put them straight back out again. After a few times, they should realise that they can stay in the room, if they are quiet.

Don't be tempted to talk to or scold them in any way, this method relies on them getting nothing (not even told off) until they behave acceptably.

Once you have practised this several dozen times, you can introduce a visitor.

Introducing the first visitor

Both of you do the same as you have practiced, ignore them completely. If they need putting out, then the visitor should sit still and ignore them while you do that. Once they are being rea-

sonably quiet, you and your visitor can have a quiet conversation, still being extremely careful to pay no attention to them. It is important that your first few visitors are not in the slightest bit nervous.

Dogs that grab clothing

If they can nip use a basket style muzzle for safety. Please ensure that you get the right size muzzle that allows them to open their mouth to pant and take treats.

Other attention seeking

Some dogs will 'steal' things for attention. If so, put lots of things out that they can have. It is very important that you ignore them, no matter what they do.

When they are quiet for a few minutes, the visitor can call them give them the treat and quiet praise you gave them.

If they want attention from or bark at visitors when they leave, then just put them out the room for 10-15 seconds. Let the visitor leave while they are out the room.

It is important that they don't think they have chased the visitor away. The key is to repeat these exercises over and over until your dog realises that they will be ignored as long as they are looking for attention.

Do exactly the same if they get excited when visitors move around. Just ignore them, put them out if necessary but only give them attention, rewards and praise after they have remained quiet for at least five minutes.

It is helpful to do some basic schooling with them before starting these exercises. Partly to build a better relationship with you but also, so they are a bit more willing to listen to you and your visitors in return for a reward.