

Greeting Visitors

Some dogs can become very excitable with visitors and guests to the home, because they have such novelty value and every effort must be made to get their attention before they leave. Although owners can tolerate this, it can be a little overwhelming for guests.

Taking control of the situation first means that you are prepared for visitors. A dog should be given an allocated rest area in the room where you spend most time with the visitors. Placing him on the lead a few minutes before they arrive sets the scene. Once the guests have arrived a pacification item should be provided to the dog, for example a food filled toy or rawhide chew, which should be reserved purely for these occasions. Visitors must be given strict instructions not to look at, fuss or speak to the dog otherwise all your training will be in vain.

Once settled your dog can be allowed to say hello, with permission and only with control provided on the lead. Each introduction should be calm and relaxed with the dog being encouraged to sit before being petted. Over several sessions you should allow greater freedom with occasional use of the lead as required. Having guests practice entering and leaving the house repeatedly, gives the dog a greater opportunity to learn the desired response.

Having the dog sit quietly and calmly on the lead and receiving a reward of praise or treat after remaining quiet, builds the dog's self control. When the dog begins to learn the new manner of greeting people and visitors, the lead can be gradually withdrawn and only intermittent use should be necessary. Remember that the value of the reward you give to the dog should be something really worth working for. This should be changed regularly so the expectancy and anticipation of the reward does not become too predictable and therefore keeps the dog motivated.

By designating a specific area for the dog and providing an alternative source of amusement when guests arrive and with consistent training, you should soon re-establish your old circle of friends.