

PREVENTING LOCATION GUARDING

Resource guarding is common in dogs. Some dogs guard their food, chews or toys. Others guard their favorite resting places or locations, which can be their bed, your bed, the couch, etc. Some will guard all of the above! It's important to teach these dogs to relax and feel good about sharing. It's accomplished through positive training, not by resorting to aggression. Punishment only adds fuel to the fire — it impedes learning and usually makes dogs worse. The following exercises teach location-guarding dogs that sharing is a win-win! It's done by rewarding them for moving over or jumping off when asked.

Training Up and Off

"Off" means for your dog to put all four paws on the ground. Whether they have two paws up on something (you, a guest, or the counter) or all four paws on something else (on furniture or in the car), "off" means to put all four paws on the floor. Here's how to train your dog to follow this command.

- **Start with the preparation.** Have a cup or so of dog sausage in your pocket or training pouch.
- **Give the command to get up.** Say "Up!" and then pat the couch and encourage your dog to jump up on the couch. When they're on the couch, praise them and give them a treat (always in that order).
- **Give the command to get off.** Now say "Off!" and toss a single treat on the floor with a sweeping, finger-point gesture, so that your dog can see the treat land. The second they jump off, praise them, and then they get their reward on the floor. Practice these steps several times until the dog is reliably going up and off.
- **Eventually, stop giving treats for jumping up.** Continue to praise and treat your dog for jumping off, but don't drop the treat before they jump off. Instead, make the off gesture as usual as if you were dropping the treat, but don't actually drop it until they jump off.
- **Cut back on treats for jumping off once your dog has this process down.** After several repetitions of the previous steps, gradually begin to reduce treats. Sometimes your dog will get praise and a treat for jumping off the furniture, and sometimes they get praise but no treat. Don't eliminate food rewards entirely — let your dog have a nice surprise once every four or five successful jump-offs. That will keep their response strong as they hope that maybe this time they'll get a reward.