



HUMP DAY: WHY DOGS MOUNT & WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

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Perhaps the most embarrassing behavior a dog can display is mounting or humping. Unfortunately, dogs don't share our sense of shame. Let's talk about the real motivation behind this behavior and what can be done about it.

WHY DO DOGS HUMP?

Despite popular belief, *it's not about dominance and it's rarely about sex.*

Outside of reproductive context, there are many reasons a dog might mount or hump, and there is no single explanation for every situation. Here are some main points to keep in mind:

IT'S TOTALLY NORMAL

These behaviors can be seen in very young puppies during play. Puppies will try out a variety of behaviors during play that are out of their functional context.

IT'S AROUSAL-BASED

And we don't mean sexual arousal. Any type of excitement or stimulation can be arousal. Anxiety, frustration, play and other surges of emotion can manifest as mounting or humping.

ANY DOG MIGHT DO IT

Male or female, intact or neutered/spayed... when actual mating is not the motivation, any dog might engage in mounting behaviors.

POSSIBLE CONTEXTS

- Over-stimulation or anxiety/frustration
- Play & social bonding
- Attention-seeking

Tip: Pay attention to what happens before and after the behavior for context clues.

In summary, mounting and humping behavior in dogs that are not sexually intact is related to being overstimulated in some way. It is not based in dominance because it does not seem to happen around competition for resources, and it's more likely to happen in a playful or friendly situation. Sometimes dogs will mount other dogs to get their attention and initiate play, though the other dog may show their displeasure with a growl or snap. Still, it is normal and natural.

DEALING WITH MOUNTING BEHAVIOR

Regardless of the motivation, many people disapprove of these behaviors and find them to be unacceptable. Luckily, there are some things you can do about it!

NEUTERING

In male dogs, neutering can decrease mounting, but it's not a surefire cure.

ATTENTION EXERCISES

Basic obedience training is helpful! Focus on attention exercises - watch me, touch, etc. - help you to get the dog's attention back on you.

REDIRECT

Interrupt or distract the dog and have them do something else. Offer a toy instead, put the dog in a down- or sit-stay, practice relaxation protocol or another behavior.

TEACH RECALL

Teach a strong recall or coming back to you when called. When you see the dog is about to mount, call them over to you and reward!