

## Mounting – What Is It and Why Our Dogs Do It

Dogs mount or hump, sometimes beginning as early as puppyhood; other times, they're late bloomers. But they aren't always mounting for the reasons you may think!

Sometimes humping or mounting is actually a learned behaviour, not a natural one. Most of the time, a mounting dog isn't acting out of sexual arousal; they are over aroused because their best buddy is in the park or they may even be feeling overwhelmed, and mounting serves as a way to relieve stress and energy.



Mounting is also how some dogs initiate play. This isn't always considered acceptable by the other party and can cause some frustration, but generally it is not persistent. Then there is the possibility of sexual arousal when a dog or multiple dogs in the area are intact; if your dog begins to offer mounting before they are altered (neutered or spayed), it may become a learned behaviour.

If you find your dog is mounting excessively, first ensure there are no underlying medical causes by speaking with a veterinarian.

There are a few things you can do to discourage mounting:

- Redirect your dog to a more appropriate behaviour.
- Reward your dog for relaxing when they would otherwise attempt to mount.
- Teach a positive interrupter to stop your dog in the act.
- Don't attempt to remove items your dog may be humping; trade up or lure your dog away.
- Reduce arousal in these situations by using reward-based training, not punishment.

