

TEACHING QUIET

Teach your dog that they are permitted to bark until you say “quiet.” Here are the steps:

- Allow your dog to bark four to five times, for example at a noise or passerby outside your house. Then say “quiet,” and prompt his silence by holding a treat right in front of his nose, guarded between your fingers.
- Wait for two or three seconds of quiet as they sniff the treat, then begin to reward them with several tiny, pea-sized treats (like chicken, hot dogs or bits of cheese) in a steady stream. Keep the rewards flowing every few seconds until whatever triggered your dog’s barking is gone.
- After enough repetitions of this sequence, over several days of training, your dog will begin to understand what “quiet” means. You’ll know that they’re catching on when they consistently stop barking — even for just a second — as soon as they hear you say “quiet.”
- At this point, you can just say “quiet” but don’t prompt them with the treat on their nose. Just count a few seconds of quiet, and then reward. Then over many repetitions, gradually extend the time between your “quiet” command and your dog’s reward. For example, say “quiet” with no treat in front of their nose, wait for five seconds of quiet, and then feed your dog several small treats in a row. Keep treating every few seconds until the trigger is gone.
- Over many repetitions, gradually increase the time between your initial cue and the rewards, as well as between your rewards, from five seconds to 10, then 20, 30, a minute, and so on.
- If the quiet procedure is ineffective after 10 to 20 attempts, training may be accelerated by interrupting the barking with a squirt gun. For example, after your dog has barked three or four times, calmly say “quiet” and squirt the dog briefly in the face. If your dog is effectively startled by the water, they’ll stop barking. The instant they do, call them away from the door or window, ask them to sit, and give them a treat. If they stay beside you and remain quiet, continue to give them frequent treats for the next few minutes until whatever triggered the barking is gone. If they resume barking right away, repeat the sequence. If this procedure doesn’t work after three attempts, please ask for further guidance.

Tips

- Rather than waiting for your dog to bark, you can knock, ring the doorbell, or use some other prompt to get them barking. Then start the process above.
- If you’re close to your dog’s real-life trigger (close to the front door or window, for example), your dog can be too agitated to even respond to your voice or treats. Just gently pull the dog away with a leash, until the two of you are farther away from the trigger. Then start training at that distance.



- Keeping a house line (a light, four-foot leash) attached to your dog and dragging on the floor behind them is a good way to gently control them when you need to. You can just pick up the end of the leash as needed and guide your dog to come with you away, rather than having to chase, holler at or grab them.
- Just like increasing duration with stay, vary longer periods of quiet with shorter ones, so your dog can't guess how long they have to be quiet each time before earning a reward. For example, start with two seconds of quiet, then increase to five. Try 10 seconds, and then go back to two. Increase to 15 seconds, then 30, then an easy five.