

# How To Train Your Dog to Speak or Be Quiet

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Teaching your dog to "speak," or bark on command can be fun as well as useful. Having your dog bark on cue can be a [fun trick to show friends and family](#). A barking dog can ward off intruders and alert you to potential danger. [Excessive barking](#) can be a huge problem, but teaching the speak/quiet commands can sharpen the natural instinct to bark yet allow you to quiet your dog when needed. With dedication and consistency, you can teach your dog to bark on command *and* to be quiet.

Different dog trainers and owners have varying techniques, but here is one basic method that works for many dogs.

Difficulty: Average

Time Required: 10-15 minutes, 1-2 times per day (may take several weeks)

What You Need:

- A bag of small but delicious dog treats
- Your dog's favorite toy
- A barking stimulus (like a doorbell or a person to knock on the door)

## **How to Train Your Dog to Be Quiet**

It's a good idea to start with the quiet cue and make sure your dog knows it before moving on to the bark cue. This is especially helpful if your dog already likes to bark a lot.

1. Create a situation that will cause your dog to bark. The best method is to have a friend ring the doorbell or knock on the door. Or, you may be able to get your dog very excited in order to cause barking. Sometimes seeing another dog can bring on barking.
2. When your dog barks, briefly acknowledge it by checking for the source (look out the window or door, go to your dog). Then, get her attention (you might try holding up the treat or toy).
1. After the barking stops, give your dog the toy or treat.
2. Repeat steps 1-3 but gradually wait for slightly longer periods of silence each time before giving the treat.
3. Choose one simple word for the quiet command. This word should also be easy to remember and used consistently. Good choices: "enough," "quiet," or "hush."
1. Once your dog has remained quiet a few times, add in the cue. While your dog is barking, say your quiet command in a firm, audible and upbeat voice while holding up the reward. Give your dog the reward when the barking stops.
2. Practice the "quiet" cue frequently. You can do this anytime she barks, but keep training sessions brief.

## How to Train Your Dog to Speak

Once your dog seems to understand "quiet," it's time to move onto the bark command.

1. Choose one simple word for the bark command. The word should be easy to remember and used consistently. Good choices include "speak," "bark," and "talk." You can make up your own word or short phrase, but make sure it doesn't sound too much like another cue word or your dog's name.
2. Once again, get your dog to bark naturally.
3. As your dog barks, say your cue word in a clear, upbeat voice.
4. Praise your dog and give him a treat or toy.
5. Repeat the speak command process several times until your dog seems to understand.
6. Once your dog learns "speak" and "quiet" separately, you can use them together. Have your dog speak a few times, then tell her to be quiet.

### Dog Training Tips for Speak and Quiet

- Rewards should be immediate and very valuable. You need to make the action "worth it" to your dog. Small liver treats, chicken pieces, or similar [training treats](#) work best.
- Some people prefer to teach "speak" first, and "quiet" second. Others like to teach them together to begin with. This is your choice; it is about your comfort level, confidence and the dog's ability to learn. Use your best judgment. Dogs with a tendency to become "excessive barkers" might need to learn the quiet command first.
- Be patient yet consistent. These commands can take weeks to master for some dogs.
- Teaching speak only works on dogs that will bark. If you are [training a puppy](#), wait until she develops the ability and desire to bark. Otherwise, she will become confused. Remember that the [Basenji](#) dog breed does not bark. However, Basenjis sometimes make a yodeling sound that you can work with. It's a great trick!
- [Clicker Training](#) works very well when teaching the speak/quiet commands.