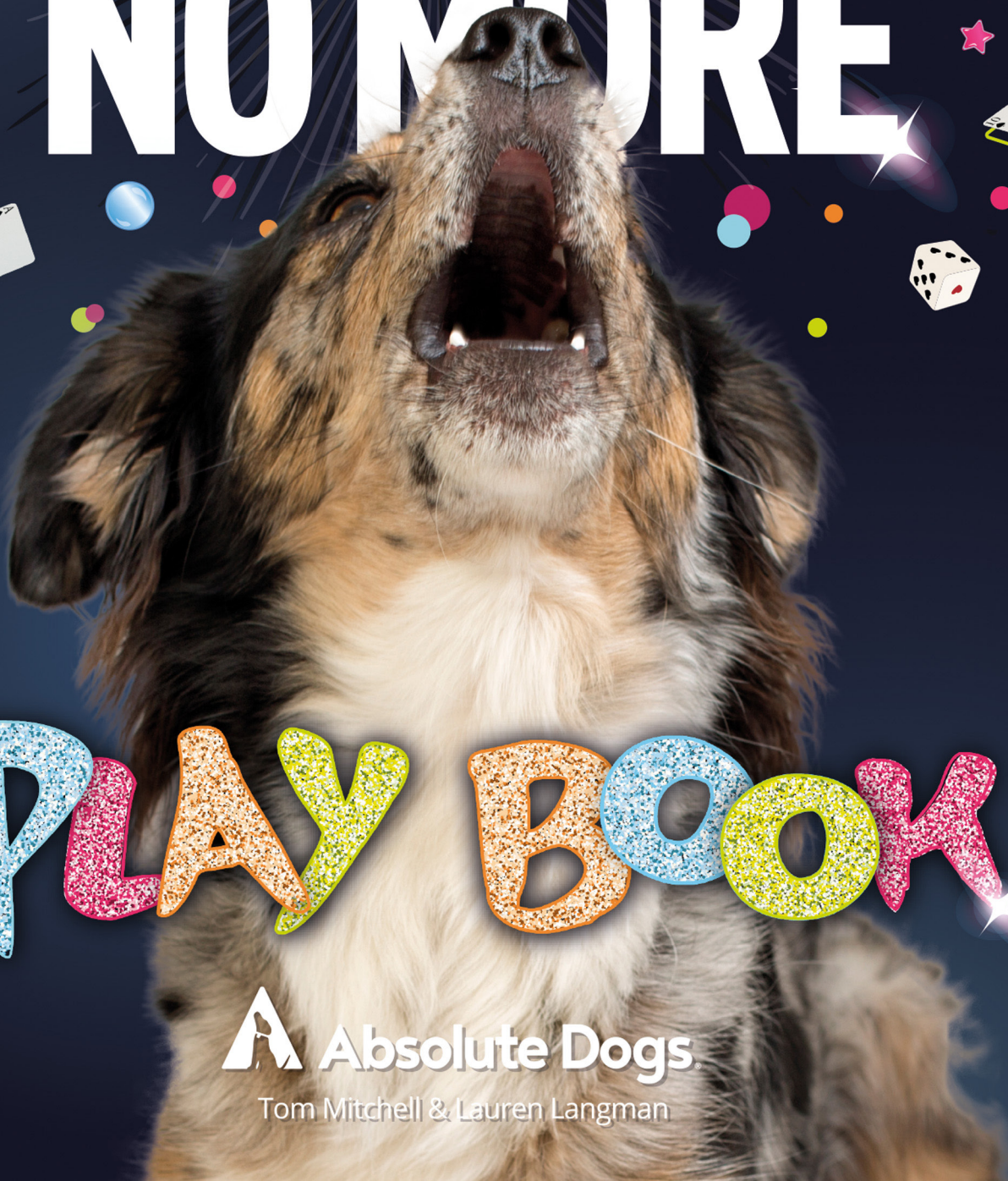


OVERCOMING INAPPROPRIATE BARKING WITH YOUR DOG
WITH THE POWER OF 3-MINUTE GAMES

BARK NO MORE



PLAY BOOK



Absolute Dogs

Tom Mitchell & Lauren Langman

BARKING IS A NORMAL BEHAVIOUR

Barking is normal dog behaviour but can become frustrating, especially when incessant.

Some dogs have a natural inclination to bark. Some breeds are more vocal because of their breeding. In other cases, while the barking isn't desirable, it has somehow remained intact in their genetic code. For example, a herding breed may be more inclined to bark than a stealthier hunting breed.

Barking comes with owning a dog. Every owner will have an expectation of what type of barking is nuisance barking vs what type and amount of barking is desirable and anticipated as part of dog ownership.



APPROPRIATE VS INAPPROPRIATE

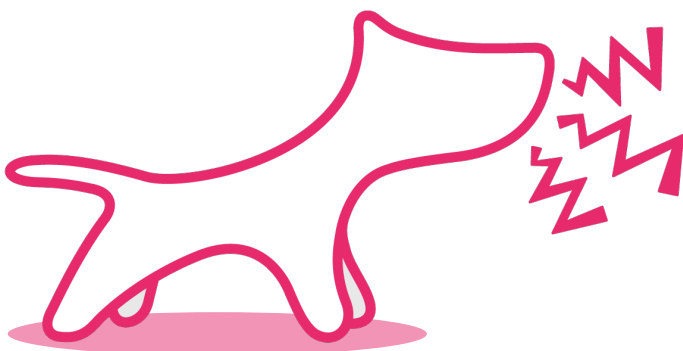
Knowing why your dog is barking can help guide you to determining what expectations may be realistic for the dog in front of you, as well as what you are comfortable with as you navigate life and fun adventures together.

Some people want their dog to let them know when a delivery person has arrived or when there may be something suspicious happening outside. Others may prefer their dog to be less vocal.

Barking is one of those behaviours that can quickly spread like wildfire if your dog rehearses it. Your dog will quickly become vocal for all sorts of unrelated reasons and barking will become a default behaviour when excited. We recommend that you choose calm over loud to ensure your dog doesn't start to bark at everything.

In the end, it is up to you. Barking is a symptom of an emotional response, and when you are looking to curb barking in your dog, it's essential to get to the bottom of the cause. Once identified, you address the cause through the magic of games training.

YouTube: Does your dog drive you BARKING mad?!



10
9
8
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Use the Bark-o-Meter to indicate the level of barking your dog performs

What causes my dog to bark



GAMES TO HELP MY DOG STOP BARKING

Absolute Dogs games training is a proven way to help train your dog in a force-free positive manner that gets life-long and real-life results. It's pretty cool stuff and is fun for you and your dog!

Here are several games to help your dog become less vocal and prevent inappropriate barking. The games described come with game cards to help you understand how to play them and measure your progress.

Good and bad events throughout the day help fill your dog's bucket. Dogs choose inappropriate behaviours when their bucket overflows. By helping your dog remain calm, you help your dog fill their bucket more slowly and even help empty it. The concept of Calmness plays an amazing role in setting any dog up for success.

[YouTube: How to Teach Your Dog to be Calm and SETTLED!](#)



Calmness Triad



Calmness allows a dog to choose contented independence over attention barking. Calmness makes it possible for your dog to choose a quiet, relaxing activity over boredom barking. Calmness is king!

Your dog's bucket

What determines whether your dog is calm or not? Every dog has an emotional bucket. The bucket can be large or small, and the dog's size doesn't determine the size of the bucket. The size of your dog's bucket is not static, and you can influence the size of your dog's bucket and the impact of things paying into the bucket through games.

How can you create calm in your home (and everywhere else)?



Passive Calming Activities

Activities that you can employ your dog in and by the nature of them doing it, they are behaving appropriately, and the activity itself encourages calm.

- Long-lasting chew
- Filled Kong
- Calm Mat
- Scatter feeding
- Scenting/Sniffing
- And more!

Active Rest is a Priority

This is an opportunity in your dog's life where choices are simplified, and only a single choice (rest, calm) is available.

Have you ever been exhausted by all of the choices you make daily? Just imagine a dog with way too many options and a lot of overwhelming information being thrown at them every minute of every day. They need active rest to help them empty their bucket.

Calmness Protocol

This is all about using your dog's daily food allowance, not feeding them in a bowl, but putting that value into calmness. Capture spontaneous moments of calm.

- Stillness
- Deep breathing
- Real calm with chin resting on the bed

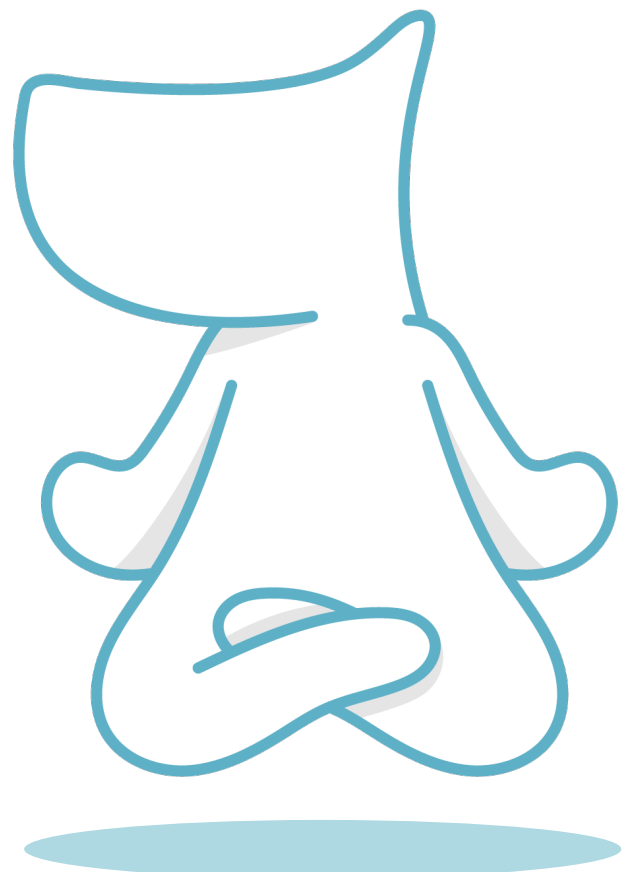
Try to avoid rewarding:

- Fake calm
- Quick, jerky behaviours that prompt you to reinforce your dog before they are calm. (Otherwise known as action prompting)

Implementing the Calmness Triad in every aspect of your dog's life, including walks, at home, and anywhere else your adventures may take you, will help your dog choose to be calm more and more often.

Encouraging calm in as many areas as possible prepares your dog to navigate life with optimism and silence.

[Free Calmness eBook](#)



DMT

(DISTRACTION, MARK, TREAT)

Now, if you've seen our games before you will know all about DMT. See a distraction, use a calm marker and then deliver a treat.

With DMT, when events (Distractions) happen, you communicate to your dog (Mark) that you have noticed them too and follow up with a reward (Treat). In this way, you are telling your dog that these distractions are not something they need to worry or be excited about. When you repeatedly tell your dog that novelty is good, you reshape their brain and condition a more appropriate emotional response to all those distractions and events that they might otherwise find worrying or exciting – and bark at!

Before you can play DMT with your dog you need to teach your dog the significance of your marker word.

Make sure you're somewhere you know your dog is going to be able to focus on you, and then say your marker word (eg, "Niiice"), and then calmly deliver a piece of your dog's daily food allowance.

Repeat this a few times, making sure you pause briefly between saying your marker word and delivering the food. This teaches your dog that, when they hear your word, a positive outcome (some yummy food) is going to follow. You are looking to see that your dog orients towards you when they hear your marker, in anticipation of that treat.

Once your dog understands your marker word and anticipates the positive outcome that follows, you can start pairing your word with distractions.

Notice a distraction (even ones your dog hasn't noticed), say your marker word, and follow up with your treat (food).

Start with easy distractions, not something your dog is terrified of or really excited by. The aim here is to pair your calm marker word with distractions in the environment and communicate to your dog that the best response is no response.

Once you and your dog have practiced this lots at home with easy distractions, you can start using it in real life and with more challenging distractions.

To reduce barking, we want you to appreciate, and we mean really appreciate, the importance of playing this game with ALL distractions – not just ones your dog is already worried about or you know are going to make your dog bark.

Why is this so important?

If you only DMT the scary things and challenging distractions that your dog is going to struggle with and bark at, you will probably accidentally teach your dog that when they hear "Niiice", there is something approaching that they need to be worried about. You are actually making them even more vigilant!

This is why the real, true power is in DMT-ing everything - way more than if you just picked the "villains" (those things you know your dog will react to). Those small, everyday distractions and events will be filling your dog's stress bucket too. When you DMT all distractions you create a much more optimistic, well-rounded dog.

When you start to play DMT, mark and reward as soon as you see the distraction, whether or not your dog has noticed it or not. If your dog won't take food, removal from the situation is the reward.

Chances are they know that the distraction is there, but you are pairing the early presence of something in your dog's environment with a positive experience.

There are several levels to DMT. Playing DMT with easy distractions is a great confidence builder, and you will find that your dog will begin to be braver and you will seamlessly move to level 2 and beyond. The most important thing to understand is that your dog shows you when they have progressed to the next level.



DMT

DISTRACTION, MARK, TREAT

You will need



DOG

+



FOOD

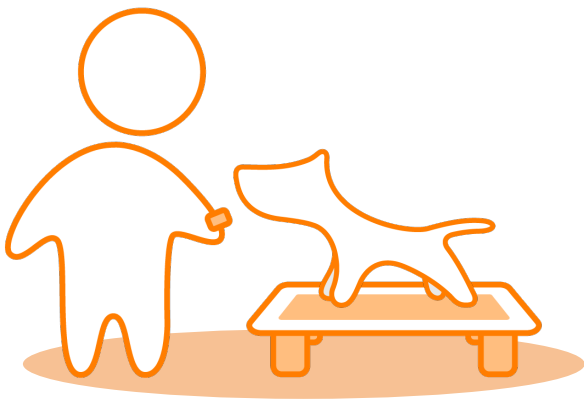
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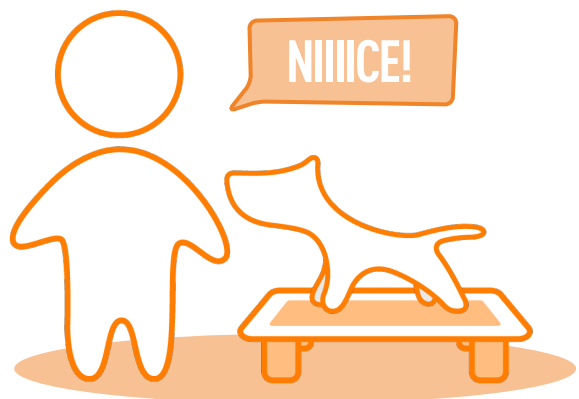
YOU



1. With your dog in front of you (on or off lead) say your calm marker word e.g. 'Niiice'...then feed your dog



2. Deliver food calmly to your dog



3. Repeat step 1 & 2 a few times - make sure there's a short moment of time between 'Niiice' and the delivery of food



4. Add a simple distraction.. eg. a leaf blowing or someone walking past. Mark 'Niiice' and then deliver the food

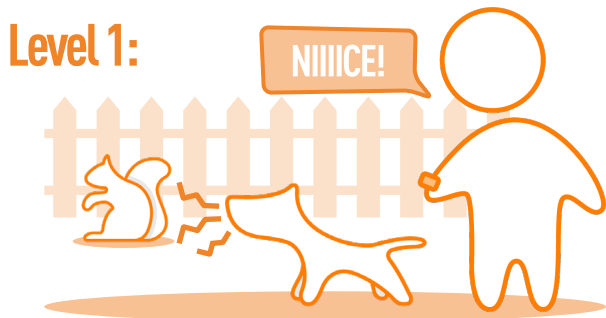


5. The aim at this stage is to pair a calm word with the idea that there's nothing to worry about

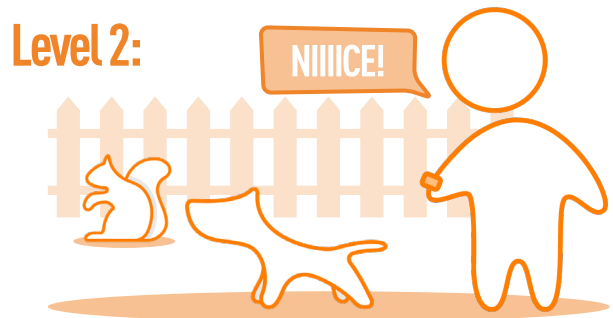


THE LEVELS OF DMT

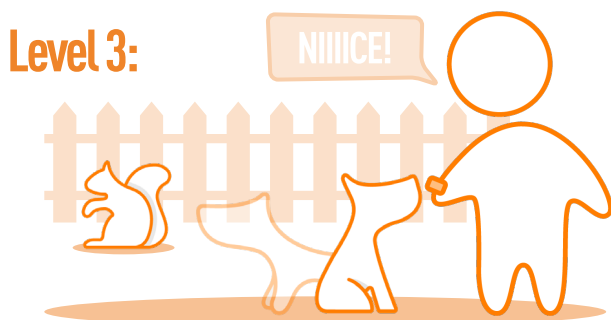
Stages of DMT - Dogs decide what level they are at.



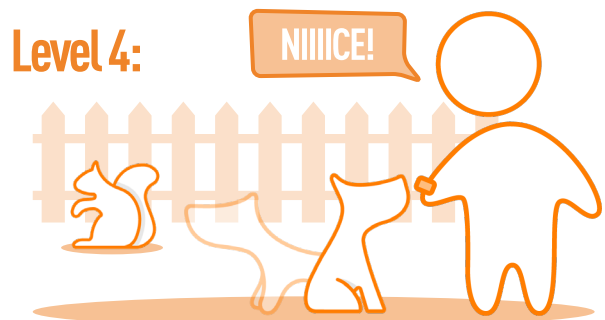
Dog sees Distraction and reacts by barking, lunging, pulling on lead etc. Mark ("Niiice") and Treat REGARDLESS OF BEHAVIOUR. If the dog is unable to take food, the REWARD in that situation is REMOVAL from the situation.



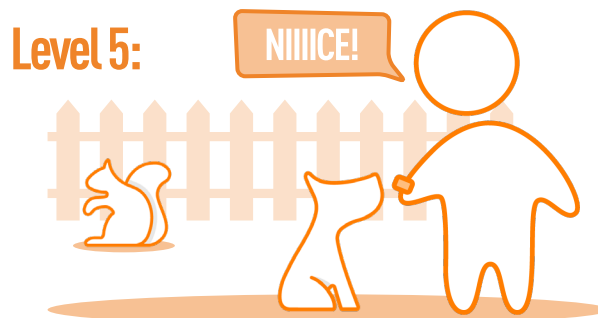
Dog sees Distraction but doesn't react. Mark ("Niiice") and Treat. Distance may still be your best option.



Dog sees Distraction, responds to your Mark ("Niiice") by orienting to you away from trigger. Treat!




Dog sees Distraction and immediately disengages and turns to you BEFORE you Mark ("Niiice") and Treat! Woohoo! Mark and Treat anyway.



Dog is aware Distraction but there is no response. Mark and Treat anyway.



PROGRESS TRACKER:

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CRAZY LADY GAME

This game might sound a little, well, crazy, but we really know it works. You are going to practice saying hello to no one regularly.

Yes, you heard us correctly. You will be saying hello to thin air whether in the house or out and about, say hello and feed your dog.

So what is the point of this game? Dogs are born predicting, and being unpredictable helps them be flexible, more chilled out, and adjustable.

Some dogs go over the top about new people, whether they like them or not. Your dog will learn that when you say hi or hello (and you can change what you say as frequently as you like), it is a non-event that doesn't always end up with a new person to greet.

You can add other sounds and triggers such as knocking on wood to simulate a person at the door, recording your doorbell, jingling keys or dog tags. Help your dog see these noises as none of their business and nothing to be worried about.

Play Crazy Lady while very little else is going on in the environment. Observe to see your dog's emotional response to each cue they hear. You want to grow confident optimists, and this starts with basic food games like the Crazy Lady game when no one is around. Pairing the Crazy Lady Game with Boundary Games (see the next game) is a very powerful combination!

How to keep your dog calm when the door knocks



Identify the sound triggers that your dog reacts to.

How will you recreate these trigger sounds?

How does your dog react when they hear the sound triggers?

Compare your dog's reactions to these sound triggers over time. How have they changed in a week, a month, six months?

CRAZY LADY GAME

You will need



DOG

+



FOOD

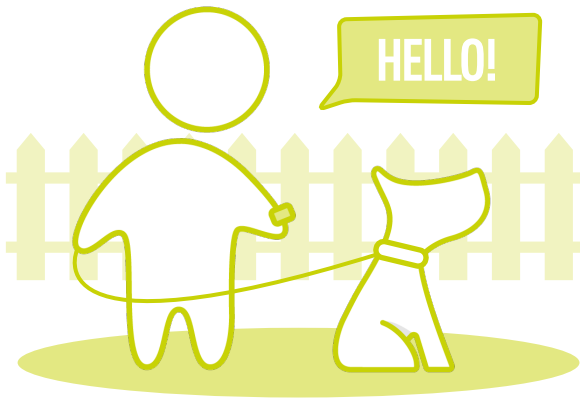
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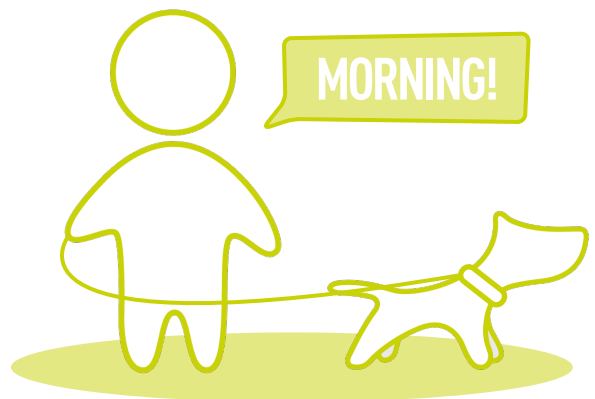
YOU



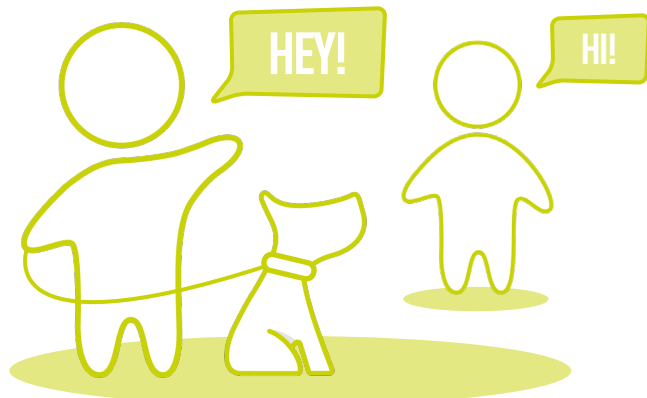
1. Begin with NO DISTRACTIONS...Say 'Hi...Hello' when they give NO RESPONSE reward with food, directly to them or scattered



2. Take the game out & about. Reward NO RESPONSE each time



3. Be unpredictable, say 'Hi' - 'Hello' - 'Morning' when they least expect it



4. Begin to incorporate more distractions...



5. Transfer & practice out & about AND at home

PROGRESS TRACKER:

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<p>LEVEL 3 REAL LIFE LOCATIONS DISTANT DISTRACTIONS</p> 	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	LOCATIONS	NOTES:
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<p>LEVEL 4 REAL LIFE LOCATIONS CLOSER DISTRACTIONS</p> 	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	LOCATIONS	NOTES:
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BOUNDARY GAMES

Do you have a dog that barks at everything that passes by your house? Are they constantly on patrol and prowling about looking out of windows?. Imagine if you could help your dog settle calmly on their bed – that is the power of Boundary Games!

Teach your dog the VERY important, in fact, vital job of staying on a boundary until released.

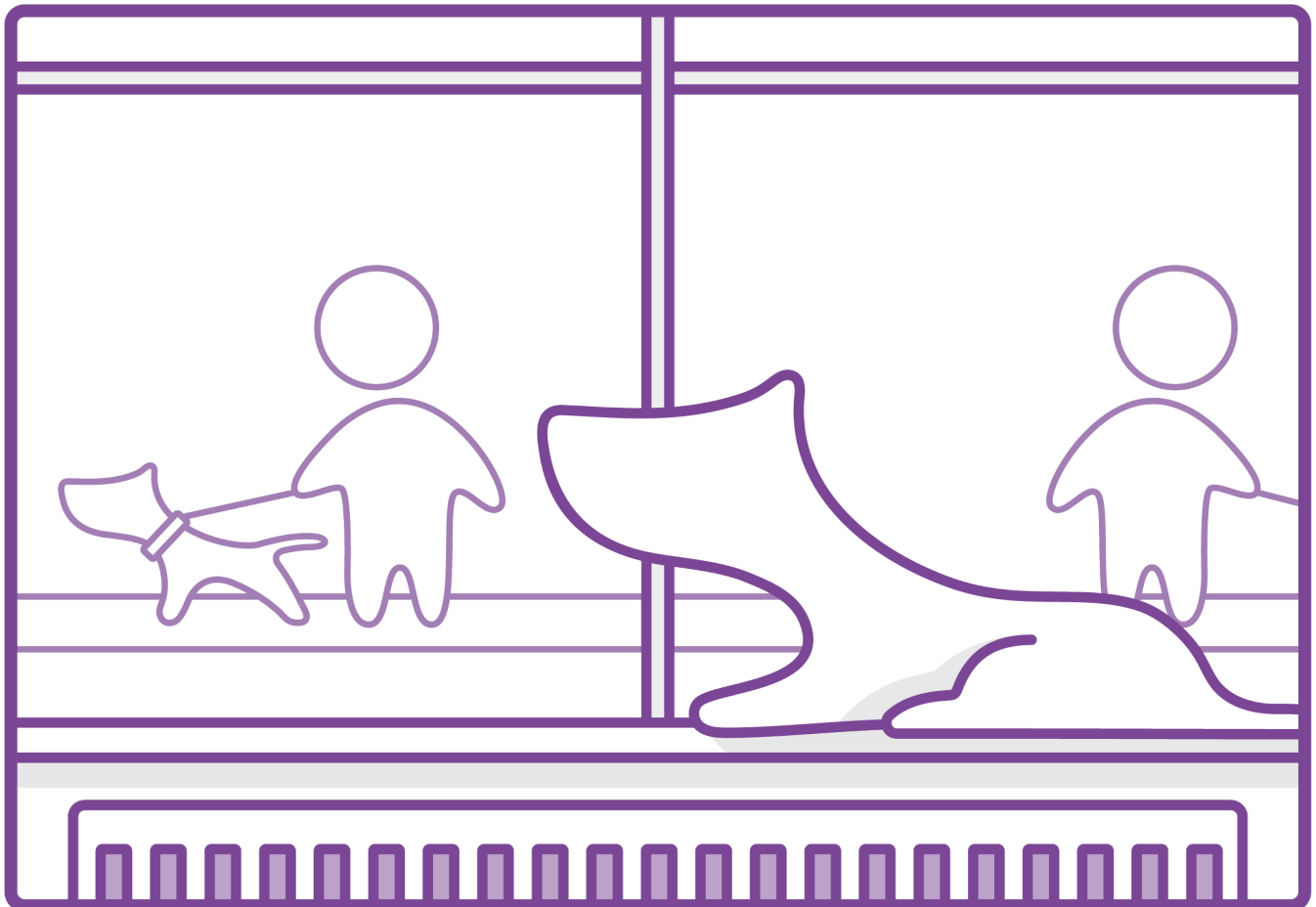
So How Do You Get Started?

A very important aspect of developing an arousal balance, an on/off switch, in training your dog is Boundary Games. These are games where your dog has to stay in a designated area until released – this may be a mat, a crate,

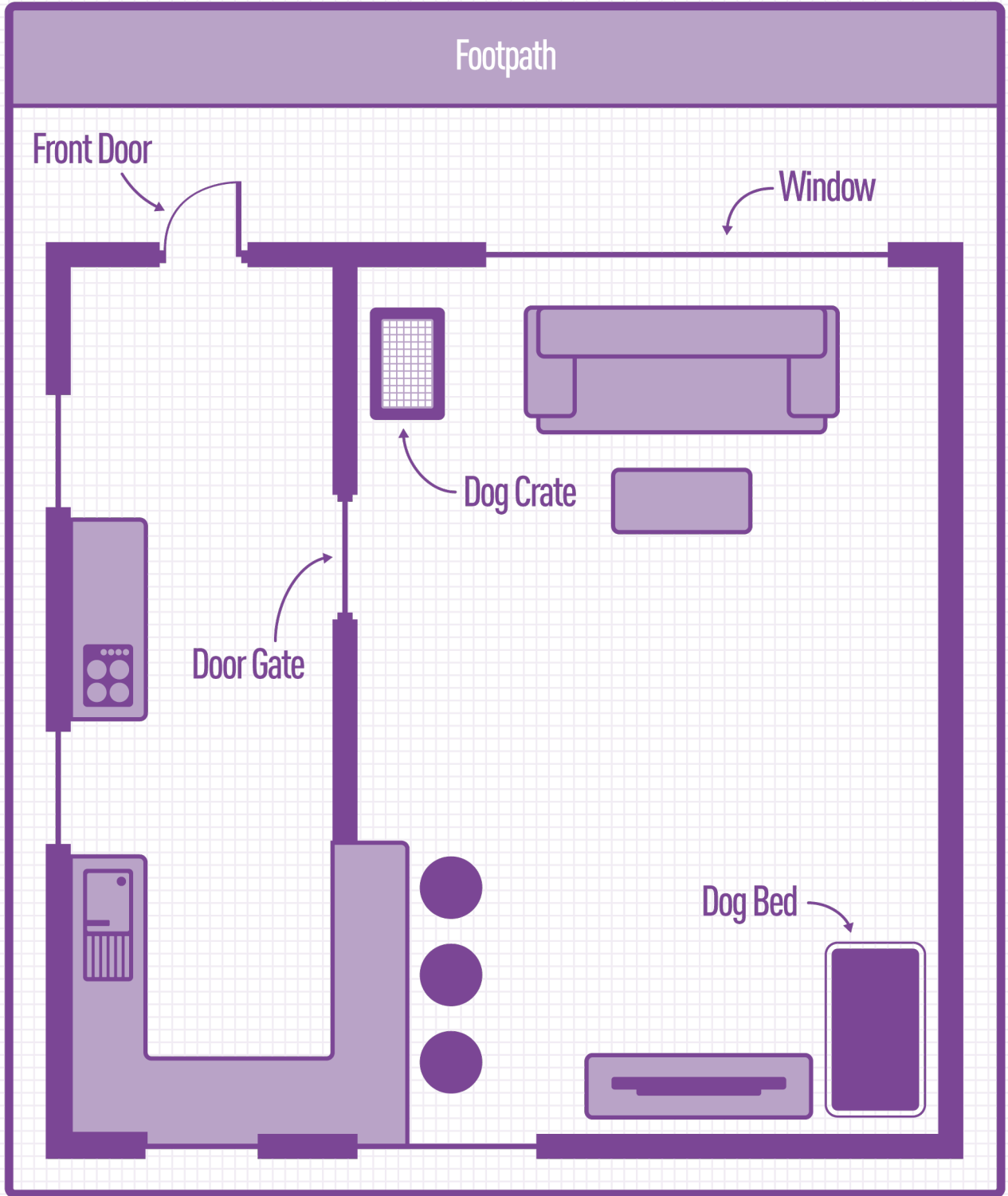
a tent, a platform, your household steps or even from room to room – you name it, it's a boundary!

Boundary Games have numerous benefits. They promote and develop impulse control. They can help balance and level out arousal as needed and boost motivation and enhance your overall relationship with your dog.

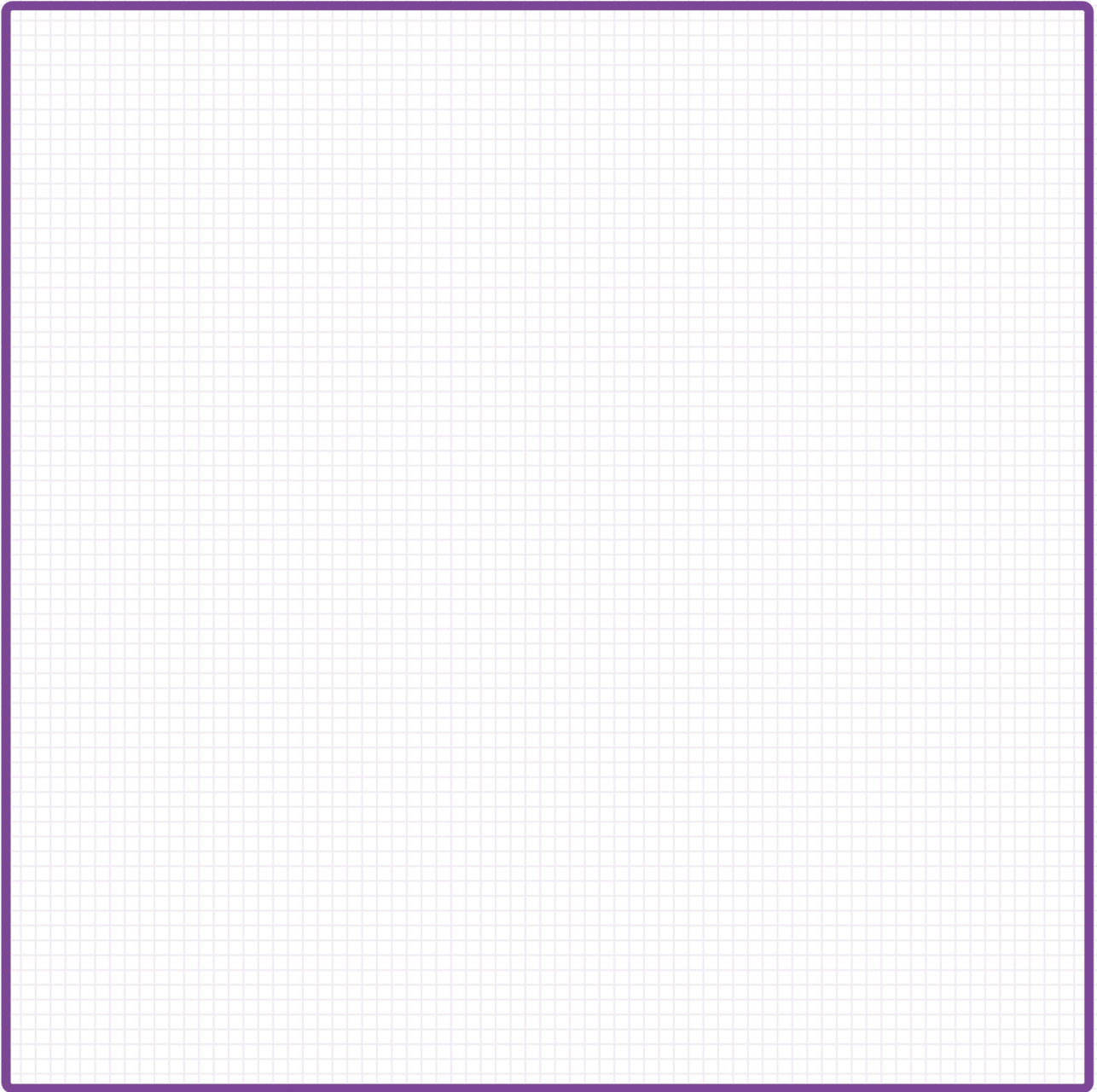
They can also decrease arousal and help to promote calmness (yes, boundaries can do both). On a practical level, they will help with your dog barking at people and dogs that pass your home by keeping them away from windows and filling their buckets. Place their boundary in a place in the house with limited views of exciting events.



Draw a plan of your home. Include the windows, doorways etc through which your dog can see the footpath (sidewalk), road or other thoroughfares commonly used by people, dogs or other distractions. Using this information, indicate the best places to set up a boundary so your dog can no longer see these distractions. These will be the best places to play and reinforce your boundary games training.



Create Your Own Blueprint



Build Optimism using boundaries: have you checked out our boundaries eBook? Boundaries are super key for success, and we love the endless fun you can have. It's all recorded in the Boundary Games eBook – check the link out to make some awesome progress.

Boundaries Rock! Podcast



Free Boundary Games eBook



BOUNDARY GAMES

You will need



DOG

+



FOOD

+

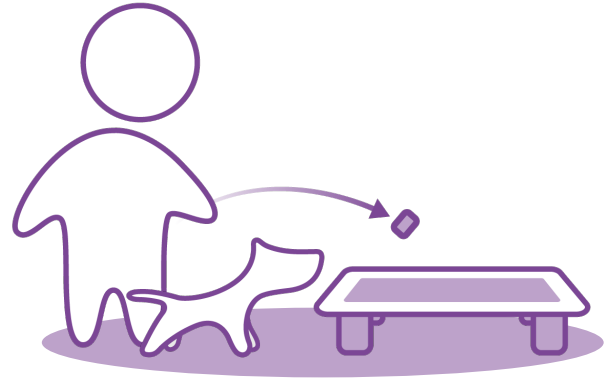


BOUNDARY

+



YOU



1. With your dog on a boundary, mark and reward any movement towards or near the boundary



2. Then reward any foot or feet on the boundary. TOP TIP: Feed the boundary not the dog. Release off the boundary by tossing a piece of food away from the boundary.



3. Reward for all 4 paws on the boundary (feed the boundary not the dog)



4. Release by tossing food away



5. Once they choose to hop onto the boundary fluently, then add a cue


PROGRESS TRACKER:

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<p>LEVEL 3 REAL LIFE LOCATIONS DISTANT DISTRACTIONS</p> 	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	LOCATIONS	NOTES:
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<p>LEVEL 4 REAL LIFE LOCATIONS CLOSER DISTRACTIONS</p> 	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	LOCATIONS	NOTES:
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<p>LEVEL 5 REAL LIFE LOCATIONS REAL LIFE DISTRACTIONS</p> 	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	LOCATIONS	NOTES:
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IT'S INFORMATION

Identifying why your dog is barking will help you know how best to deal with that barking. The way you would help a dog with fear-based barking is different from the way you would help a dog that is barking because of boredom.

There are several different reasons why a dog might bark, including:

Excitement Barking/Frustration Barking

You will see this type of barking often during play. If a dog anticipates something awesome is about to happen and begins to bark, they may be excited or frustrated that the event hasn't happened yet. This bark is higher in frequency and may involve whining.

Frustration barking can have some cross over with excitement barking. When playing games, if your dog starts to bark at you and jump toward you, this can indicate that whatever you're doing isn't clear to them or that what they expect to happen is not happening.

You will observe this type of barking during training, play, and when your dog is behind a barrier and access to something isn't immediate. Your overly-friendly dog may bark at people and other dogs because they want to access them. It's important not to let them access when they behave in this way.

Anxious Barking

You may hear this type of barking (and sometimes howling) in dogs with separation-related struggles. It can carry on for a while, and it's important not to let your dog rehearse this barking but instead focus on games that encourage calmness and gradually build up independence.

Fear-Based Barking

This type of barking sounds similar to frustration barking, except it's deeper and more fearful. The body language that follows may include lunging or trying to move away.

When a dog is scared of something, most will choose to get away from it or to try to "scare it away". If your dog has displayed any fear behaviour, it's important to work on growing your dog's confidence and optimism.

What's cool about growing your dog's optimism and confidence and establishing calm as a default state is that no matter whether your dog is fearful or over-excited, working on non-event training (DMT) will help your dog.

Attention Seeking Barking/Demand Barking

This can start as a frustration bark and then develop into attention seeking/demand barking fairly quickly as soon as the initial barking is reinforced. Did you know that you can reinforce barking by telling your dog to quiet down? Any attention can be perceived as reinforcing your puppy, which can feed the behaviour and make it "better" (more likely to occur).

Boredom Barking

This type of barking can occur when a dog is under-stimulated. For example, when confined, in the garden, etc. The barking is often disjointed, and there doesn't appear to be an intention behind it. Your dog may not even be focusing on anything specifically. This is a type of attention-seeking behaviour.

THE FINAL REWARD

When you understand why your dog is barking, you can intervene appropriately and help your dog navigate through the world in silence.

Build calmness in your dog by employing the Calmness Triad. Ensure your dog gets plenty of rest, time to relax through passive activities and be rewarded for being calm.

Keep playing DMT to show your dog that the world will present plenty of novel situations for them to observe, but they are none of their business and can check in with you when they notice them. Barking is no longer their default behaviour.

Help your dog see common triggers such as door knocking or you saying hello as nothing to be worried about. Grow confidence in your dog and help them remain calm during unexpected events.

Grow your dog's desire to remain on a boundary to prevent them from patrolling your house or

yard looking for things to bark at. Boundaries also provide your dog with a comfortable place to rest and get some calming sleep!

Finally, listen to your dog to discover why they are barking. Understanding that underlying cause can make all the difference in planning their day and training goals.

You are the best owner for your dog. You have made the first step to help them with their struggle. Always celebrate your wins, no matter how small, and use any setbacks as valuable information to help guide your training. You have become a gamechanger!



OVERCOMING INAPPROPRIATE BARKING WITH YOUR DOG WITH THE POWER OF 3-MINUTE GAMES



PLAY BOOK

We understand that barking is a natural behaviour, but that doesn't mean that every time our dog barks should be ignored or doesn't come with a solution attached. We have put together a Playbook that is filled with games, interactive prompts and more to help you achieve the real-life results you need. Get ready for some super-charged tips , strategies, games and insights.