

Knock at the door game.



Teach Your Dog to Stay Calm When Someone Knocks

Does your dog bark excessively or dash to the door whenever someone knocks? This game will help teach them to stay calm and either stay in place or sit by your side, creating a more peaceful and controlled environment.

Why This Game Works

A knock on the door can be an exciting or stressful event for dogs. By creating a clear routine and rewarding calm behaviour, your dog will learn that staying relaxed is far more rewarding than reacting impulsively.

What You'll Need

- High-value treats (small and enticing).
- A helper to knock on the door.
- A lead, if needed, to guide your dog during the training.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Set the Scene

Position yourself and your dog where you'd like them to stay during the exercise. This could be:

- A designated spot, like their bed or a mat (for "stay in place").
- Sitting calmly next to you (for "sit by your side").

Ask a helper to stand outside and knock softly at first.

2. Allow a Quick Bark

It's natural for your dog to bark a couple of times to acknowledge the knock. Calmly say, "Thank you, that's enough," in a steady tone to signal it's time to settle down.

3. Redirect and Cue Calm Behaviour

Use a treat to guide your dog into the desired position:

- **For staying in place:** Use the treat to lure your dog to their bed or mat and say "place." Once they step onto it, ask for a "sit" or "down" and reward them.
- **For sitting by your side:** Use the treat to guide them into a sitting position next to you and say "sit." Reward them as soon as they sit calmly.

4. Teach the Wait Command

Once your dog is in position, hold another treat and say "wait." Use a stop-hand gesture for clarity. Gradually step away or move toward the door while they stay in position. Reward them if they remain calm and still.

5. Introduce the Door Opening

With your dog in position (either on their mat or by your side), ask your helper to knock again. Slowly approach and begin to open the door. If your dog stays calm, reward generously. If they move or bark, calmly reset them and try again.

6. Build Duration and Complexity

Gradually increase the time your dog needs to "wait" before the door is opened. Practice

with louder knocks and eventually introduce more distractions, like visitors entering. Always reward calm behaviour to reinforce the habit.

Tips for Success

- **Consistency is Key:** Practice daily in short, 5-10 minute sessions.
- **Start Small:** Begin with soft knocks and short “wait” durations, then build up as your dog improves.
- **Choice of Position:** Decide whether your dog stays in place or sits by your side and stick to it during each session to avoid confusion.
- **Stay Calm:** Your tone and energy are crucial—your dog takes cues from you.
- **End on a High Note:** Always finish training on a positive note when your dog is successful.

By giving your dog the option to either stay in place or sit calmly by your side, you’re creating a clear structure that works for your household. With regular practice, your dog will respond calmly to knocks at the door, making every greeting a stress-free experience for both of you!