

# THANK YOU FOR BARKING

Protocol by Kiki Yablon



## 01 Prep

Select a designated "delivery spot" – somewhere your dog will always collect their reward. Place a snuffle mat in the spot. This spot should ideally be away from the most triggering location/s (e.g. doors, windows). Have a treat station ready to go by your "delivery spot. Prep really good treats your dog never gets otherwise.

## 02 Management First

To stop the practice of the barking during training sessions, prevent your dog from perceiving his/her triggers as much as you can. This might mean blocking access to the window or door and/or putting white noise or music on to mask outside noise.



## 03 Training your Cue

Start when your dog is calm, attentive, and hungry. Stand or sit near your dog, then say "thank you" and go to the designated spot. Drop 5-10 small treats into the snuffle mat or on the floor. Wave the cue before dispensing treats, and give treats regardless of whether your dog comes to you. Once your dog gets excited about the cue, start using it even if they don't fully pay attention. Try saying the cue from different spots so your dog hears you. Practice and reward your dog when they come to you. Practice in various areas of the house and with distractions that are interesting but not typical barking triggers.

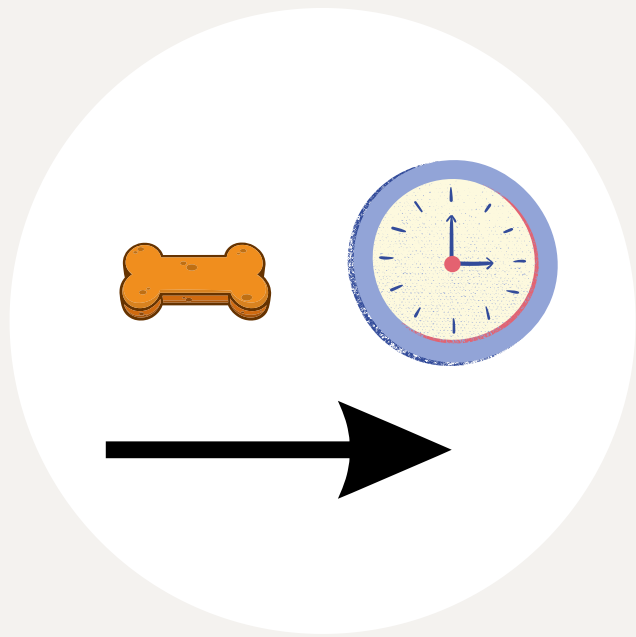


## 04 Rewarding the Bark (Or Even Better, Precursors to Barking)

When your dog quickly turns toward you or the location upon hearing the cue and anticipates treats, begin training in situations where your dog would normally bark at outside stimuli. Give the cue as soon as your dog starts barking or alerting. Start by standing next to your dog, saying "thank you," and leading them to the treat delivery spot. If your dog doesn't respond, guide them by placing treats close to their face and leading them over. As your dog responds with the trigger present, gradually increase your distance from them, stepping back a few steps at a time. Gradually increase distance when your dog is consistently responding at the current distance. Ideally, give the cue as soon as your dog shows signs of alerting to something and moving toward the window, though it may initially be after a bark or two. The goal is to have your dog come away from the window to find you with the cue after minimal barking. Ensure your dog is reacting to an actual stimulus outside and avoid thanking them for barking in unrelated contexts to prevent creating new barking issues.

## 05 Moving the Reward Down the Line

Instead of calling your dog as soon as he barks, wait a few seconds for him to turn away from the window or back toward you on his own. When he does, immediately thank him and reward any movement towards you or the snuffle mat handsomely. You may notice that his barking becomes less frequent or that he starts looking or moving towards you or the treat container upon noticing the trigger/s. Reinforce even the smallest correct movements right away.



**Note:** if you are finding yourself constantly saying "thank you", the training is too hard and/or your management of outdoor noises is not sufficient. Make training easier and find new ways to cover up sounds before continuing.