



DOG TRAINING & OBEDIENCE

Targeted, step-by-step protocols for the two most common behavior problems.

CPC Dog Training

DIGITAL SELF-HELP GUIDE



The Barking & Pulling Fix

*Targeted, step-by-step protocols for the two
most common behavior problems.*

CPC DOG TRAINING

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WELCOME

Before You Begin

Barking and leash pulling are the two problems that push owners over the edge. They're relentless, they're public, and they make the parts of dog ownership that should be enjoyable — a quiet evening, a walk around the block — genuinely stressful. The good news is that both are extremely fixable, and neither requires force, shouting, or any device that hurts your dog. What they require is understanding what's actually driving the behavior, then applying the matching fix consistently. That's what this book does. Part one decodes barking and gives you a protocol for the doorbell, the window and visitors. Part two explains the surprisingly simple reason dogs pull, and walks you through a loose-leash method you can start on today's walk. Read the chapter that matches your worst problem first if you like — but do read the diagnosis chapters. Applying the right fix to the wrong cause is why most attempts fail.

— *The CPC Dog Training Team*

Getting the Most From This Book

This is a short book by design — but it isn't a race. The ideas here work best when you let them settle and put them into practice, one at a time. Here's how to get the most from the pages ahead.

1

Read actively.

Every chapter ends with a *Try This* exercise and a set of *Key Takeaways*. The reading plants the idea; the exercise is what makes it yours.

2

Start small.

You don't need to apply everything at once. Choose a single practice, let it become genuinely easy, and only then add another.

3

Keep what works.

Anxiety is personal. Some tools will click for you and others won't — keep the ones that help and quietly leave the rest.

4

Be kind to yourself.

Progress is never a straight line. A hard day isn't a failure or a reset to zero — it's simply part of the path.

Whenever you're ready, turn the page and let's begin.

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What Barking Really Means

Barking isn't one behavior. It's a category — several different problems that happen to make the same sound. That's exactly why generic advice fails: the fix for a bored bark and the fix for a frightened bark are almost opposites. Before you change anything, you need to know which one you have.

The four common types

Alarm barking is triggered by something specific — a knock, a passer-by, a car door. It's usually sharp, repetitive, and directed at a location. Demand barking is aimed at you, and it's asking for food, attention, or the ball. It typically stops the instant it works.

Boredom barking is more monotonous and self-sustaining, often when your dog is alone or under-stimulated. Fear or anxiety barking comes with body language you can read: a tucked tail, backing away, pacing, or barking that continues long after the trigger has gone.

You can't fix barking until you know what your dog is barking about. The sound is the symptom, not the problem.

Watch what happens immediately after

The most reliable way to diagnose is to watch the consequence. If the barking stops the moment you look at your dog, speak to them, or hand something over, you're almost certainly dealing with demand barking — and your attention is the thing maintaining it.

If the barking stops when the trigger disappears from view, it's alarm barking. If it happens mostly when your dog has been idle for hours, suspect boredom. If it's accompanied by a stressed body and slow recovery afterwards, treat it as fear and be gentle.

Never punish the bark itself

It's tempting to suppress the noise directly, but punishing a bark works against you in every category. With alarm and fear barking, it adds a second unpleasant thing to a situation your dog already dislikes, which usually makes the underlying feeling worse even if the sound briefly stops.

There's also a safety issue. Barking is communication and a warning. A dog who has learned that warning gets punished may skip the warning next time and go straight to something more serious. Change how your dog feels and what they do instead — never just silence the signal.

Try This — Build Your Trigger Map

Spend two days logging barks. The pattern that emerges tells you which protocol to run.

1. Each time your dog barks, note the time, what happened just before, and what happened just after.
2. After two days, group the entries: alarm, demand, boredom, or fear.
3. Circle the single most frequent category — that's your primary problem.
4. Note the top three specific triggers within it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Barking is four different problems wearing the same sound.
- Diagnose by watching what happens immediately after the bark.
- Never punish barking — change the feeling and teach an alternative instead.

The Quiet Protocol

Now the practical work. This chapter gives you the two things that actually reduce alarm barking at doors and windows — managing what your dog can see and hear, and teaching a specific alternative behavior — plus the fix for demand barking, which is different and simpler.

Manage the trigger first

Before training anything, reduce how often the trigger fires. A dog rehearsing alarm barking forty times a day at the window is getting very good at alarm barking. Frosted film on the lower half of the window, a closed curtain, moving the dog bed away from the front room, or white noise near the door all cut the reps dramatically.

Management isn't cheating and it isn't permanent. It buys you a calmer baseline so the training below has a chance to work. Most owners skip this step and then wonder why progress is so slow.

Every unanswered bark at the window is a rep. Close the curtain and you've cancelled forty training sessions you never wanted.

Teach 'go to place' as the answer

Your dog needs something to do instead of barking. 'Place' — going to a mat or bed and settling — is ideal, because it's incompatible with charging the door. Teach it away from the door first: reward your dog for stepping onto the mat, then for lying down, then for staying a few seconds, building up gradually.

Once it's solid, connect it to the trigger. Have someone knock very lightly, then cue 'place' and reward heavily. Over many sessions, increase the knock's realism. The goal is for the knock itself to become the cue that means go to the mat — because that's where good things happen.

Demand barking: change what works

Demand barking runs entirely on payoff, so the fix is to stop paying and to pay something else instead. When your dog barks at you for attention or food, become completely uninteresting — no eye contact, no talking, no touching, no 'no'. Any response is a response.

Then, the moment there's a pause — even two seconds of quiet — mark it and reward. You're teaching a swap: quiet gets what barking used to get. Expect an extinction burst, where the barking gets louder and more insistent for a few days before it fades. That escalation is proof it's working, and giving in during it is the single most common way owners accidentally train a much worse barker.

Try This — Reduce the Reps Today

Start with management, which works immediately and costs nothing to try.

1. Identify where your dog does most window or door barking.
2. Block the view or the access — curtain, film, closed door, or move the bed.
3. Add background sound near the front door if noises are the trigger.
4. Count barks tomorrow and compare — most owners see a drop within a day.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Manage the trigger first so your dog stops rehearsing the barking dozens of times a day.
- Teach 'place' as the incompatible alternative, then attach it to the trigger.
- For demand barking, ignore completely and reward the pause — and expect a temporary spike.

Why Dogs Pull

Leash pulling feels like defiance, but it's the least mysterious behavior in this book. Dogs pull for one simple reason, and once you see it clearly, the fix becomes obvious — and the reason most anti-pull attempts fail becomes obvious too.

Pulling works

Your dog wants to get to the lamppost. They pull. They arrive at the lamppost. From their point of view, pulling is a perfectly reliable transport system that has worked every single day of their life. Nothing about that is naughty — it's just a behavior with an outstanding track record.

Add to that a natural walking pace roughly twice yours, plus a world of smells demanding investigation, and a loose leash is genuinely difficult for a dog. You're not correcting a character flaw. You're changing a very well-reinforced habit.

Your dog isn't pulling because they're dominant. They're pulling because it has worked every day since they were a puppy.

Why the usual attempts fail

Most owners inadvertently train pulling harder. They let the dog pull for most of the walk, then correct occasionally — so pulling still works about ninety percent of the time. Intermittent success makes behavior stronger, not weaker, which is precisely why the problem gets worse over months.

Tools that cause discomfort can suppress pulling while they're on, but they don't teach the dog what to do instead, and they add a painful association to walks. When the tool comes off, the pulling is still there because the underlying lesson — walking near me pays — was never taught.

The one rule that fixes it

Here's the whole principle: a tight leash never moves you forward, and a loose leash always does. If pulling reliably stops all progress, it stops working. If walking beside you reliably produces forward movement — the thing your dog wants most — it becomes the better strategy.

It sounds almost too simple, and the catch is consistency. This only works if it's true on every walk, not most walks. The next chapter turns it into a concrete method, including how to handle the fact that you sometimes just need to get somewhere.

Try This — Audit One Walk

Before changing anything, see how often pulling currently pays off for your dog.

1. On your next walk, count roughly how many seconds your dog spends with a tight leash.
2. Notice how often you keep walking anyway while the leash is tight.
3. Estimate the percentage of pulling that successfully moves your dog forward.
4. That number is what you're about to change to zero.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Dogs pull because pulling reliably gets them where they want to go.
- Occasional corrections make pulling stronger, because intermittent success is powerful.
- The fix: a tight leash never advances, a loose leash always does — every walk, no exceptions.

The Loose-Leash Method

Here is the concrete protocol. It takes patience for the first week or two and then improves quickly. The one thing it demands is consistency, so read the section on separating walk types before you start — that's what makes it survivable in real life.

Set up for success

Use a well-fitted harness with a front clip or a plain flat collar, and a fixed-length leash of about two metres. Avoid retractable leads entirely for this work — they teach your dog that pulling extends their range, which is the exact opposite lesson.

Have high-value treats accessible in a pocket or pouch. Start in the most boring environment available: your hallway, garden, or the quiet stretch directly outside your door. A busy street is far too hard for the first sessions.

***You are not walking your dog today.
You are teaching your dog how walks
work from now on.***

Stop, wait, reward the return

Walk forward. The instant the leash goes tight, stop dead. Don't yank, don't scold, just become an anchor. Wait. Your dog will eventually ease the tension — glancing back, stepping toward you, or simply shifting their weight. The moment there's slack, mark ('yes!') and walk on immediately.

Forward movement is the real reward here; the treat is a bonus.

Additionally, reward generously whenever your dog is walking near you with a loose leash without being asked. Most owners only interact with the leash when things go wrong — pay for the good position and you'll see far more of it.

Separate training walks from transport walks

You cannot do stop-start training when you're late for work, and pretending otherwise is how people abandon this method in week one. So split your walks explicitly. Training walks are short, unhurried, and follow the rules absolutely. Transport walks are for getting somewhere.

On transport walks, use a different piece of equipment — a distinct harness, or clipping to a different ring. Dogs discriminate on context remarkably well, and a clear signal for 'this one has rules' versus 'this one doesn't' protects your training from the reality of your schedule.

Try This — Ten Minutes on a Boring Street

One short, patient session on easy ground teaches more than an hour of frustration downtown.

1. Pick the duller stretch near your home and allow ten minutes with no destination.
2. Walk forward; the instant the leash tightens, stop completely.
3. Wait for slack — say nothing — then mark and walk on immediately.
4. Reward generously any time your dog walks near you on a loose leash unprompted.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Use a fixed-length leash and a well-fitted harness — never a retractable lead for this.
- Stop the instant the leash tightens; forward motion is the reward for slack.
- Split training walks from transport walks, with different gear as the signal.

Handling Reactivity

Barking and lunging when another dog appears is not the same problem as ordinary pulling, and treating it as disobedience makes it worse. This chapter covers what to do in the moment, and how to build tolerance over time — gently.

Distance is the whole game

Every dog has a threshold — the distance at which they notice a trigger but can still think, eat, and respond to you. Inside that distance, they're flooded and no learning happens. The single most useful skill is recognising when you're too close and creating space immediately.

Find your dog's threshold by watching for early signs: a hard stare, a stiffened body, ears forward, refusing food they'd normally take. Food refusal is the clearest signal you've crossed the line. Back up until they can eat again — that's your working distance.

Refusing food is your dog telling you they're over threshold. Listen to it, and add distance.

Change the meaning of the trigger

At that safe distance, the moment your dog notices the other dog, start feeding — a steady stream of excellent treats. When the other dog

goes out of sight, the food stops. Repeated over many sessions, this teaches a simple association: other dogs predict chicken.

You're not rewarding the barking; you're changing the emotional response that causes it. Over time, many dogs start looking at the trigger and then immediately back at you — the 'where's my chicken?' look. That's the behavior you're aiming for, and it's incompatible with lunging.

The emergency u-turn

Real walks ambush you. A dog appears around a corner at three metres and you have no space. For this, teach an emergency u-turn in advance: say a cheerful cue like 'this way!', turn, and jog a few steps away, rewarding heavily. Practise it a hundred times with no trigger present so it's automatic.

When you're ambushed, use it without hesitation. Retreating isn't failure or giving up on training — it's preventing a rehearsal of the exact behavior you're working to eliminate. A blow-up sets you back further than an early exit ever will.

Try This — Find the Threshold

Everything in reactivity work starts from knowing your dog's working distance.

1. Position yourself where you can see dogs at a distance — a park edge or quiet corner.
2. When one appears, offer a high-value treat.
3. If your dog takes it calmly, you're under threshold. If they refuse, move further away and retry.
4. Note that distance — it's your starting line for all future sessions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Work only at a distance where your dog can still eat and think.
- Feed while the trigger is visible to change what it predicts, not to reward barking.
- Practise an emergency u-turn in advance and use it without guilt when ambushed.

Making It Stick

Both fixes in this book work. The question is whether they hold six months from now, when the novelty has worn off and you've stopped paying attention. This final chapter is about proofing your progress and catching regression before it becomes a relapse.

Proof in stages

A quiet dog in your kitchen and a loose leash on your empty side street are the beginning, not the finish. Gradually add difficulty: busier streets, more interesting times of day, other dogs at a distance, visitors who actually ring the bell.

Add one difficulty at a time, and drop your expectations when you do. If the environment gets harder, make the task easier — shorter distance, better treats, more support. A skill that collapses in a new place hasn't been lost; it just hasn't been generalised there yet.

*The problem isn't fixed when it stops.
It's fixed when the better habit is the
one that pays.*

Watch for quiet regression

Regression rarely announces itself. It creeps back when you're tired: you let the leash stay tight because you're late, you respond to a demand bark because you're on the phone. Each one is a small deposit back into the old habit.

Do a monthly honest check. On one walk, count tight-leash seconds. For a week, note whether demand barking is creeping up. Catching a slide early takes a few days of tightening up; ignoring it for two months means starting close to the beginning.

Keep paying for the good stuff

The most common long-term mistake is stopping all reinforcement once the problem is solved. Behavior that never gets paid eventually fades, and pulling and barking have decades of evolutionary payoff behind them waiting to fill the gap.

You don't need treats forever, but keep noticing. A word of praise for a loose leash, a scratch for settling when the doorbell goes, permission to sniff as a reward for checking in. Keep the good behavior worth doing and it will keep happening. And if things ever escalate — genuine aggression, bites, or intense fear — stop and bring in a certified professional in person. Some problems need eyes on the dog, and there's no shame whatsoever in that.

Try This — Set a Monthly Check

A five-minute review each month protects months of work.

1. Put a recurring monthly reminder in your phone called 'walk + bark check'.
2. On that day, count tight-leash seconds on one normal walk.
3. Note roughly how many demand barks happened that day.
4. If either number has crept up, run a tight week of the original protocol.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Generalise deliberately — one new difficulty at a time, with easier expectations.
- Regression is quiet and gradual; a monthly count catches it early.
- Keep reinforcing good behavior long-term, and call a professional for aggression or intense fear.

Your Action Plan

Both protocols on one page. Start with management and diagnosis — the fastest wins are there — and be patient through the first fortnight of leash work.

- ☐ Log two days of barking and identify your primary category.
- ☐ Block the view or access that triggers most window and door barking.
- ☐ Teach 'place' away from the door, then attach it to a light knock.
- ☐ For demand barking, give zero response and reward the pause.
- ☐ Expect an extinction burst and do not give in during it.
- ☐ Audit one walk to see how often pulling currently pays off.
- ☐ Switch to a fixed-length leash and a well-fitted harness.
- ☐ Stop dead every time the leash tightens; walk on the instant it slackens.
- ☐ Reward loose-leash position generously, unprompted.
- ☐ Separate training walks from transport walks with different gear.
- ☐ Find your dog's threshold distance using the food-refusal test.
- ☐ Feed while triggers are visible; practise an emergency u-turn in advance.
- ☐ Set a monthly check on tight-leash seconds and demand barks.

- ☐ For aggression, biting or intense fear, work with a certified professional in person.

FINAL WORDS

Where You Go From Here

You came here because walks were stressful and the barking was wearing you down. Both of those are solvable, and neither needed force — just an accurate diagnosis and a consistent response. Start with the management step today, because it works immediately and buys you calm while the training catches up. Then pick one protocol, run it properly for two weeks, and resist the urge to fix everything at once. Progress here is usually unglamorous: slightly quieter evenings, slightly looser leashes, until one day you realise the walk was actually pleasant. Keep going through the first fortnight, keep paying for the behavior you want, and don't hesitate to bring in a qualified trainer if you hit something that feels beyond a book. Your dog isn't being difficult. They're doing what has always worked — and you're about to change what works.

Breathe. Begin. Return.

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