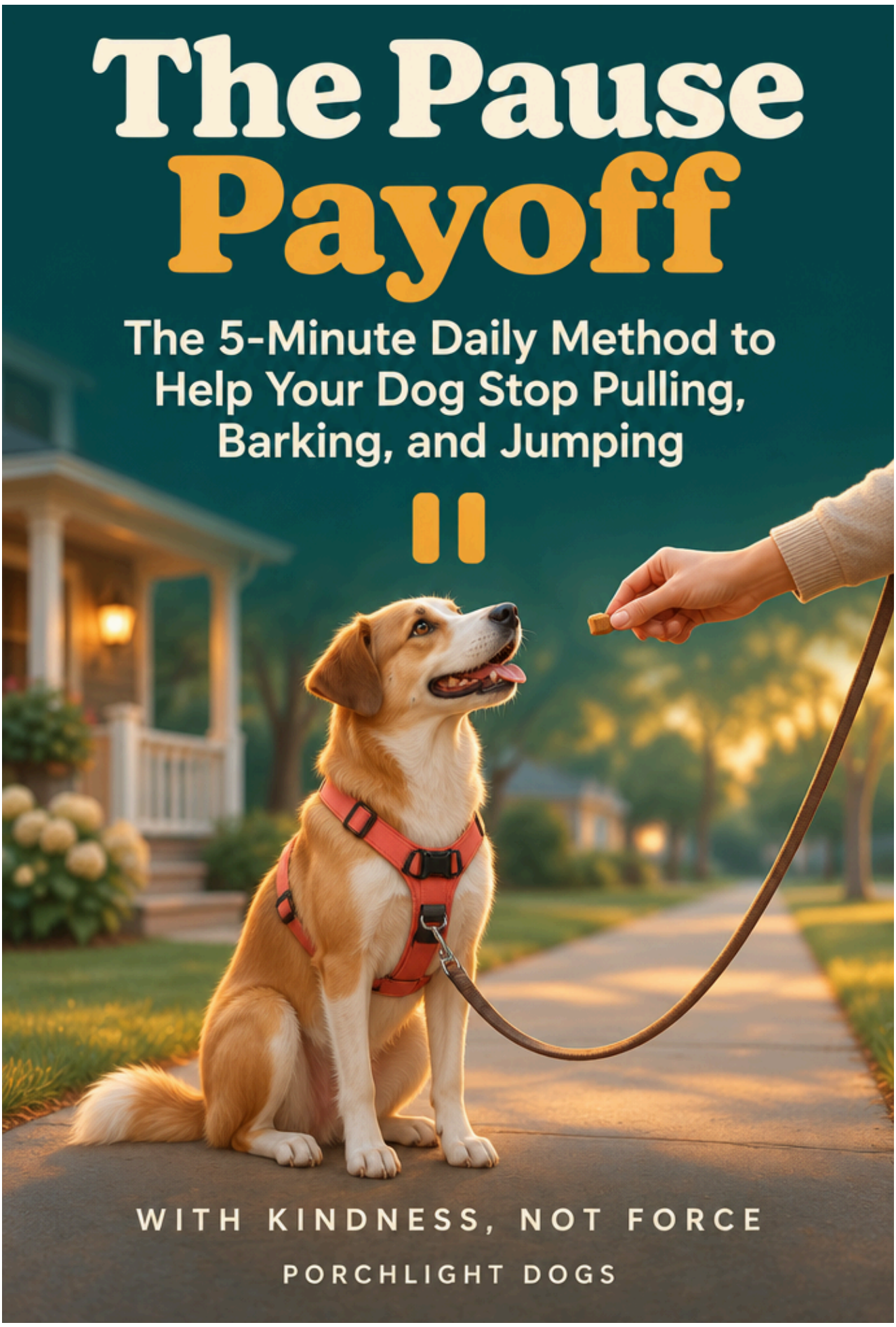
The Pause Payoff

The 5-Minute Daily Method to Help Your Dog Stop Pulling, Barking, and Jumping



WITH KINDNESS, NOT FORCE

PORCHLIGHT DOGS

The Pause Payoff

The 5-minute daily method to help your dog stop pulling, barking, and jumping. With kindness, not force.

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START HERE

Read This First

Five minutes now can save you a lot of trouble later.

Important safety notice

This book is **general education** for everyday dog manners. It is not veterinary care. It is not a diagnosis. It does not replace a veterinarian, a veterinary behaviorist, or a qualified behavior professional who can see your dog in person.

You know your dog, and you are responsible for your dog's safety and the safety of the people and animals around them. If a step in this book doesn't feel safe for your situation, skip it and ask a professional.

STOP AND GET HELP FIRST IF YOUR DOG HAS ANY OF THESE

- **Bites or attempted bites**, snapping, or growling that worries you
- **Strong fear**: shaking, hiding, trying to escape, or freezing
- **Panic when left alone**: destroying doors, injuring themselves, non-stop howling
- **A sudden change in behavior** with no clear reason, at any age

Do not try to handle these with this book alone. Start with your veterinarian. Chapter 11 tells you who to call and what to ask.

Who this book is for

This book is for families with a **friendly, healthy dog** who has normal but annoying habits. Your dog drags you down the street. Your dog barks at the doorbell, the mail carrier, or you. Your dog jumps on guests, on kids, or on your good pants.

You don't need experience. You don't need a big yard. You need a bag of small treats, a leash, and about five minutes at a time.

What to expect, honestly

We can't promise you a timeline, and nobody else honestly can either. Every dog is different. Age, breed, health, past training, and how long the habit has been going on all matter. So do your home and your schedule.

This book includes a *14-day plan*. That plan is a **structure**, not a deadline. It gives you something clear to do each day. Some dogs will move through it faster. Many will need longer. Some will need to repeat a stage two or three times. All of that is normal, and none of it means you failed.

What you can count on is this: you'll know what to do today, why you're doing it, and what to do if it isn't working.

The methods in this book

Everything here is **reward-based**. That's in line with the 2021 position statement on humane dog training from the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB), which recommends reward-based methods for all dog training. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) reported on that statement in its news pages, and its pet ownership guidelines ask owners to train and socialize their pets.

That means this book never asks you to use choke chains, prong collars, shock collars, spray bottles, shaker cans, leash jerks, yelling, or physical punishment of any kind.

About the examples

You'll meet dogs like Biscuit, Moose, and Pepper in these pages. **They are made up.** We use them to show how the steps look in real life. They aren't real clients, they aren't testimonials, and their progress isn't a prediction for your dog.

Organizations named in this book are cited as sources only. None of them wrote, reviewed, or endorsed this book. Web addresses were checked in November 2026 and may change.

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START HERE

How to Use This Book

You don't have to read it all before you start.

The whole idea on one page

Pulling, barking, and jumping look like three separate problems. They aren't. In each one, your dog is **rushing toward something they want**, and rushing has been working.

So we teach one skill: **the Pause**. A Pause is a tiny moment of calm. It looks a little different in each situation:

The problem	The Pause looks like	The payoff
Pulling on leash	A bit of slack in the leash	A treat, or moving forward again, or a good sniff
Barking	A closed mouth for a second	A treat, your attention, or the thing they wanted
Jumping up	Four paws on the floor	A treat, a calm hello, or a chance to say hi

You catch that small moment and you pay for it. Over time your dog learns that *slowing down* gets the good stuff, and that rushing doesn't. Then you stretch the Pause, little by little, in harder places.

That's the method. The rest of the book shows you exactly how to do it, one step at a time.

Pick your route

If you want...	Do this
To start today	Read Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Then go to Day 1 in Chapter 8.
To understand it first	Read the book in order. It takes an evening or two.
One problem fixed before the others	Read Chapters 2 to 4. Then read only the chapter for your problem (5, 6, or 7).
Help for a puppy, a rescue, or a senior	Read Chapter 10 before you start the plan.
To know if you need a pro	Go straight to Chapter 11.

How much time this takes

- **Sessions:** about 5 minutes each, up to 3 a day. Short sessions keep your dog fresh and keep you from quitting.
- **Daily walks:** you'll use the walks you already take. You won't need extra time, but you will need to walk a bit differently.

- **Setup:** about 30 minutes once, to get your gear ready and make a few small changes at home.

Missed a day? Skip the guilt and pick up where you left off. A few short sessions most days beat one long session on Sunday.

What the boxes mean

TRY THIS

A small exercise or a quick tip you can use right away.

EXAMPLE

A made-up dog showing how a step can look at home.

GOOD TO KNOW

A bit of background that makes the training easier.

WATCH OUT

A safety point, or a moment to bring in a professional.

PART 1 · CHAPTER 1

Why Your Dog Does It

Your dog isn't being bad. Your dog is being a dog, and it's working.

In this chapter

- Why pulling, barking, and jumping keep happening
- Why force tends to backfire
- What your dog needs before training can work

1.1 Your dog isn't trying to annoy you

Let's clear something up first. Your dog isn't stubborn, spiteful, or trying to run the house. When your dog drags you to a fire hydrant, they aren't making a point. There's a great smell over there and you're walking too slowly.

Dogs do what works. That's true for every dog, and it's good news. It means the behavior you don't like isn't a character flaw. It's a **habit**, and habits can change.

When you stop asking "Why is my dog being so bad?" and start asking "What is my dog getting out of this?", everything gets easier.

1.2 Behavior that pays, stays

This is the single most useful idea in dog training: **behavior that gets rewarded happens more often.** The tricky part is that a reward is whatever your dog wants at that moment. It may not look like a reward to you.

- Your dog pulls and gets to the bush. *Pulling paid.*
- Your dog barks at the mail carrier and the mail carrier leaves. From your dog's side, *barking paid.* It works every single day.
- Your dog jumps and you push them off while saying "No, no, down!" You touched them, looked at them, and talked to them. *Jumping paid.*

Veterinary and training sources agree on that last one. The AKC and VCA Animal Hospitals both point out that pushing, grabbing, or scolding a jumping dog can still count as attention, and attention is the thing the dog was after.

TRY THIS: THE TWO-MINUTE PAYOFF HUNT

Pick your dog's most annoying habit. Write down what happens in the **next five seconds** after it. Does your dog get closer to something? Does someone look, talk, or touch? Does the scary or exciting thing go away? Whatever you wrote down is probably the payoff. That's what you'll take away or replace.

1.3 Three problems, one root

Look at the three big habits side by side and you'll see the same pattern in each.

Habit	What your dog wants	How the habit has paid	What we'll pay instead
Pulling	To get there now	Pulling moves you both forward	Slack leash
Barking	Attention, distance, or an outlet for excitement	People respond, or the trigger goes away	A quiet moment
Jumping	To get close to a face and say hello	People react, even if they're annoyed	Four paws on the floor

Each one is a dog in a hurry. The fix for each one starts the same way: your dog learns that **a small moment of calm is the fastest way to get what they want.**

One thing to note. Not all barking fits this picture. Some barking comes from fear, anxiety, or pain, and that kind needs a different approach. Chapter 6 helps you tell which is which.

1.4 Why force tends to backfire

You've probably been told to "correct" your dog. Maybe a friend swears by a prong collar. It's worth knowing what the research says.

AVSAB, a group of veterinarians and scientists focused on animal behavior, reviewed the evidence in its 2021 position statement. In its words, "There is no evidence that aversive training is necessary" for training or behavior change. "Aversive" here means methods that rely on force, pain, or fear. The statement summarizes several findings:

- In observational studies, dogs trained with aversive methods showed more stress signs during training, such as lip licking, a lowered body, and yelping.
- Survey studies link aversive methods with more behavior problems over time. These studies can't prove cause. Even so, if force solved these problems, you'd expect the opposite pattern.
- A 2004 study by Hiby and colleagues found the highest obedience in dogs trained only with rewards and the lowest in dogs trained only with aversive methods.

A 2020 study in *PLoS ONE* by Vieira de Castro and colleagues compared dogs from schools using different methods. Dogs from schools using aversive methods showed more stress during training. They also responded more pessimistically in a test given away from training.

There's a practical side too. A dog who gets a leash jerk each time they see another dog may learn that other dogs mean pain. That's how a mild problem can grow.

1.5 You can drop the "alpha" idea

If someone tells you to "show your dog who's boss," you can politely ignore them. AVSAB has a separate position statement on this. It says dominance theory shouldn't be used as a general explanation for dog behavior, and it shouldn't be used to justify force. AVSAB's guide to choosing a trainer lists words like *alpha*, *pack leader*, and *dominant* as red flags.

You don't need to eat first. You don't need to walk through doors first. You don't need to pin your dog down. Your dog isn't plotting a takeover. You just need clear rules and good timing.

1.6 Kind doesn't mean "anything goes"

Reward-based training isn't permissive. AVSAB makes this point too: dogs do well with structure, routine, and guidelines. What changes is *how* you set those limits. You set them without fear, intimidation, or pain.

In this book, you'll set plenty of limits:

- A leash, so your dog can't reach the squirrel
- A baby gate, so your dog can't rush the door
- A closed curtain, so your dog can't watch the street all day
- Walking away, so jumping gets nothing

These are limits. They just don't hurt.

1.7 Check the basics first

Training works best on a dog whose needs are met. A dog who is tired of being bored will find their own fun, and you won't like it. Run through this list before Day 1. You don't have to fix everything at once. Pick your weakest item and add a little.

- ☐ **Vet check.** Is your dog up to date on checkups? Pain and illness can change behavior. In a 2020 review in the journal *Animals*, Mills and colleagues gave a conservative estimate that around a third of dogs referred for behavior problems had some painful condition. If your dog's behavior has changed, or your dog is older, book a checkup first.
- ☐ **Exercise.** Does your dog get daily activity that suits their age and health? Ask your vet if you aren't sure how much is right.
- ☐ **Sniffing.** Does your dog get time to sniff?
- ☐ **Brain work.** Does your dog have puzzle feeders, chew toys, or training games? ASPCA and VCA both suggest mental activity for dogs who bark or chew from boredom.
- ☐ **Rest and routine.** Does your dog have a quiet place to sleep? Are meals, walks, and potty breaks fairly predictable? VCA recommends a steady routine.

PART 1 · CHAPTER 2

The Pause Payoff Method

One small skill. Five simple steps. Three big problems.

In this chapter

- What a Pause is and how to spot one
- The P.A.U.S.E. loop you'll use for everything
- How to know when to make things harder or easier

2.1 What a Pause is

A Pause is the **smallest bit of calm your dog can give you right now.** At the start, that may be very small indeed:

- A half-second of slack in a tight leash
- The gap when your dog stops barking to take a breath
- The moment all four paws touch the ground between jumps

You may not have noticed these moments before. Most of us only notice dogs when they're doing something wrong. From now on, your job is to become a **Pause spotter.**

TRY THIS: THE PAUSE HUNT

Put ten small treats in your pocket before you sit down tonight. Each time you catch your dog doing something calm, like lying down, looking at you, or walking past the door quietly, say "Yes!" and toss a treat. No commands. Just catch calm moments. When the ten treats are gone, you're done.

2.2 The P.A.U.S.E. loop

Every exercise in this book uses the same five steps. Learn them once and you can use them for almost any everyday habit.

P	A	U	S	E
Prep the scene	**Ask for a little**	**Use your marker**	**Serve the payoff**	**Extend slowly**
Set things up so the old habit is hard to do.	Pick a Pause your dog can do right now.	Say "Yes!" the moment the Pause happens.	Pay right away with what your dog wants.	Make it slightly harder only when it's easy.

P: Prep the scene

This is the step most people skip, and it's the one that matters most. Each time your dog practices the old habit and gets paid, the habit gets stronger. So we make it hard to practice. Close the curtain. Use a gate at the door. Train in the hallway before you train at the park. AVSAB's statement says common issues like jumping and barking can be managed by arranging the environment and rewarding the responses you want.

A: Ask for a little

Don't ask for a perfect walk. Ask for one loose step. Don't ask for silence through a whole delivery. Ask for one quiet second. If your dog can't do it, you asked for too much, and that's a useful thing to learn.

U: Use your marker

A **marker** is a short sound that means "That! That's the thing I'm paying for." We use the word "Yes!" A clicker works too. Timing is the whole game here. The marker has to land *during* the Pause, not after your dog has moved on.

S: Serve the payoff

After the marker, deliver the reward within a second or two. Food is the easiest payoff to start with. Later you'll also pay with real-life rewards: a sniff, a door opening, a greeting, a toy.

E: Extend slowly

Once your dog finds a step easy, stretch it a bit. Two seconds instead of one. Three loose steps instead of one. Your hallway, then your driveway. Small steps feel slow, but they're usually faster than failing and starting over.

2.3 The loop in action

EXAMPLE: BISCUIT AND THE FRONT DOOR (MADE UP)

Biscuit is a two-year-old beagle mix. She jumps on anyone who comes through the door. Here's how her family uses the loop.

Prep: They put a baby gate across the entry hall, so Biscuit can't reach the door.
Ask: Dad stands on the other side of the gate. He wants just one thing: four paws on the floor.
Use marker: Biscuit stops bouncing for a moment. "Yes!"
Serve: He drops a treat on the floor, on her side of the gate. Dropping it low keeps her head down.
Extend: Over the next few sessions he waits for two seconds of four-on-the-floor, then three. Later his sister tries it. Later a neighbor tries it.

Some days Biscuit goes backward, especially when she's been alone all afternoon. On those days they go back a step. That's part of it.

2.4 The three payoff rules

1. **Pay fast.** Your dog connects the reward with what they were doing just before it. Mark first, then reach for the treat. If your hand goes to your pocket first, your dog learns to watch your pocket.
2. **Pay small.** Treats should be pea-sized or smaller. Many small rewards work better than a few big ones, and your dog won't fill up.
3. **Pay what your dog wants.** Your dog decides what counts as a reward. If they spit out the kibble in the driveway, kibble isn't enough pay for the driveway.

2.5 The three dials

When you "extend," you're turning one of three dials. **Turn only one at a time.** When you turn one up, turn the others down for a while.

Dial	What it means	Easy	Harder
Distance	How close the exciting thing is	The other dog is across the park	The other dog is across the street
Duration	How long the Pause lasts	One second of quiet	Ten seconds of quiet
Distraction	How interesting the place is	Your kitchen at night	The sidewalk at school pickup

Our "8 out of 10" rule of thumb

How do you know when to turn a dial? Count ten tries.

- **About 8 or more right:** make it a little harder.
- **Between 5 and 7 right:** stay where you are.
- **Fewer than 5 right:** make it easier. Go back a step.

This is a handy working rule, not a scientific law. If you and your dog are both frustrated, make it easier no matter what the count says.

2.6 An honest note: is this new?

No, and you should be wary of anyone who says they've found a secret trick. The science here has been around for decades. Rewarding what you want, managing the setting, and building up slowly are standard parts of reward-based training.

What's different here is how it's packaged. Most advice treats each problem as a separate list of tips. We give you **one idea and one loop** you can use in all three situations. That means less to remember, and when you're holding a leash with one hand and a bag of groceries with the other, that matters.

2.7 Six common mistakes

Mistake	What to do instead
Repeating cues: "Sit. Sit. Sit! SIT!"	Say it once. If nothing happens, your dog may not know it there yet. Make it easier.
Long sessions	Stop at 5 minutes, ideally while your dog still wants more.
Moving up too fast	Use the 8 out of 10 rule. Change one dial at a time.
Skipping the Prep step	Every rehearsal of the old habit counts. Block it when you aren't training.
Everyone has different rules	Put the family rules on the fridge. VCA warns that mixed rules can make a habit stronger.
Only training when it's going badly	Practice when things are calm. A real emergency is a test, not a lesson.

PART 1 · CHAPTER 3

Your Training Kit

What to buy, what to skip, and how to read your dog.

In this chapter

- The short gear list
- How to build your dog's Payoff Menu
- The signs that tell you to stop or slow down

3.1 The short gear list

You don't need much. You probably own most of this already.

Item	Why you want it	Tips
A plain 6-foot leash	Gives your dog room and gives you clear feedback when it goes tight	Skip retractable leashes for now. They keep steady tension on, which is the opposite of what we're teaching.
A well-fitted harness	Takes pressure off the neck. A front-clip harness can make pulling less effective.	Check for rubbing behind the legs. Make sure the shoulders can move freely. Ask your vet if your dog has joint, neck, or breathing issues.
A treat pouch	Keeps your hands free and your timing fast	A jacket pocket or a zip bag is fine.
A mat or small bed	Gives your dog a clear place to go	A bath mat or folded towel works. You'll want one that's easy to move.
A baby gate or pen	Blocks the door during guest practice	A closed door or a leash can do the same job.
Window film or a curtain	Blocks the view for dogs who bark at the street	ASPCA suggests blocking the view. Frosted film from a hardware store is cheap.
Food toys and chews	Give your dog something to do	Choose chews with your vet's advice. Watch your dog with any new chew.

About harnesses: AVSAB-published guidance lists no-pull harnesses as non-aversive management. Harness design varies, and people who study dog movement still debate how front-clip harnesses affect gait. Think of the harness as a helper during training, not as a cure. Your vet can advise you on your dog.

3.2 What to leave out

Pet aisles and online ads are full of quick fixes. Please skip these.

Skip this	Why
Choke chains, prong or pinch collars	They work through pain. AVSAB says trainers should avoid them.
Shock collars, "e-collars," "stim" or "tap" collars	Same issue, even with friendly names. AVSAB's statement reports no difference in effectiveness between shock collars and reward-based methods for teaching recall, even with experienced trainers.
Citronella or spray bark collars	AVSAB-published guidance lists them with aversive tools. ASPCA calls anti-bark collars punishment devices and advises against using them as a first choice.
Ultrasonic bark gadgets	They're meant to annoy or startle your dog. That puts them in the same family, and they don't teach your dog what to do instead.
Spray bottles, shaker cans, air cans	AVSAB lists these as tools of intimidation. VCA warns that startling a dog can make them fearful and wary of people.
Leash jerks, alpha rolls, kneeing, hitting, yelling	All of these rely on force or fear. They carry risks to your dog and to your relationship. Some can get you bitten.

3.3 The Payoff Menu

Think of rewards as a pay scale. Easy jobs get regular pay. Hard jobs get overtime. Spend three minutes making your dog's Payoff Menu. Offer a few foods and see which ones your dog gets most excited about.

Pay level	Use it for	Examples
Regular pay	Easy practice at home	Your dog's own kibble, plain small training treats
Good pay	New skills, the yard, the driveway	Soft commercial training treats, small bits of plain cooked carrot if your dog likes them
Jackpot pay	Real life: other dogs, guests, the doorbell	Tiny bits of plain cooked chicken or turkey, or small cubes of low-salt cheese if your dog tolerates dairy
Real-life pay	Everything, once the skill is solid	A sniff, a chase after a ball, a door opening, a hello from a friend, moving forward on the walk

Some dogs love toys more than food. That's fine. A two-second game of tug can be a payoff. It just takes longer to deliver.

3.4 Treat safety and calories

- **Watch the calories.** A common rule from veterinary nutritionists at Tufts and from VCA is that treats should be no more than about 10% of daily calories. Use part of your dog's regular meal as training pay, and cut meals a bit on heavy training days.
- **Check for xylitol.** The FDA warns that this sweetener is dangerous to dogs. It's found in sugar-free gum and candy and in **some peanut and nut butters**. Always read the label.
- **Know your dog.** If your dog has allergies, a sensitive stomach, diabetes, or a special diet, ask your vet which rewards are safe.

- **Keep people food plain.** No onions, garlic, grapes, raisins, chocolate, or cooked bones. If you aren't sure about a food, don't use it.
- **Tiny means tiny.** Small pieces lower the choking risk and the calorie count. For a small dog, cut treats even smaller.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> If your dog eats something dangerous, call your vet or an emergency clinic right away. The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center is at **(888) 426-4435**. A fee may apply.

> **WATCH OUT: FOOD GUARDING**
>
> If your dog stiffens, growls, or snaps around food, toys, or chews, don't use food around other pets or kids. Talk to a professional before you start. See Chapter 11.

3.5 Charge up your marker

Your dog needs to learn what "Yes!" means. It takes a couple of minutes.

1. Sit somewhere quiet with ten small treats.
2. Say "Yes!" in a bright, normal voice.
3. Give a treat within a second or two.
4. Wait a few seconds and repeat. Your dog doesn't have to do anything.
5. Do this ten times, once or twice in the same day.

You'll know it's working when your dog's ears perk up or they look at you when they hear "Yes!" Two rules from now on: **every "Yes!" gets paid**, and use the word only for training, so it keeps its meaning.

3.6 Reading your dog

Training should feel like a fun game to your dog. Your dog can't tell you when it stops being fun, at least not in words. But they do tell you. VCA and AVMA both describe common signs of stress and worry.

Green: keep going	Yellow: make it easier or take a break	Red: stop and create distance
Loose body Soft eyes Relaxed, open mouth Wagging with a loose body Comes back to you for more	Lip licking when no food is around Yawning when not tired Turning head away Ears back Raised paw Stops taking treats Sniffing the floor a lot to avoid you	Stiff, frozen body Hard stare Tail tucked Trembling or cowering Showing teeth Growling, snapping, or lunging

Context matters. Your dog might lick their lips because you've got chicken in your hand. A dog might yawn because it's bedtime. Look at the whole dog and the whole situation.

Never punish a growl. A growl is your dog saying "I'm not okay with this." AVMA explains that a dog who growls or snaps is telling you it wants to be left alone. If you punish the growl, you may lose the warning and keep the problem. Calmly move your dog away from the trigger, and call a professional.

AVSAB also says the learner should feel safe and be able to opt out of training. So if your dog walks away from a session, let them. Then ask yourself why. Was the session too hard? Too long? Was the pay too low?

3.7 How to run a session

- [ ] **Pick a time.** Before a meal works well. Avoid the moment right after a big run or a big meal.
- [ ] **Pick a spot.** Start in the most boring room in your house.
- [ ] **Count out treats.** Twenty or so small treats is a good session. When they're gone, you're done.
- [ ] **Set a timer.** Five minutes. Stop when it rings, even if things are going well.
- [ ] **End on a win.** Finish with something easy your dog knows.
- [ ] **Write one line.** Use the tracker in the Appendix. It takes ten seconds and shows you real progress.

PART 1 · CHAPTER 4

Five Foundation Games

Five easy games that power everything else in this book.

In this chapter

- Check-In, Touch, Find It, Four on the Floor, Go to Mat
- What each game fixes later
- How to tell when your dog is ready to move on

These five games are your toolbox. They're short, they're fun, and most dogs pick them up with practice. They're also the tools you'll grab in real life when a squirrel or a guest shows up. Teach them at home first.

Game	What it teaches	You'll use it for
Check-In	"Looking at my person pays"	Walks, distractions, barking
Touch	"Bring your nose to my hand"	Moving your dog without pulling, greeting practice
Find It	"Look down and sniff for food"	Emergencies, door arrivals, passing triggers
Four on the Floor	"Standing or sitting calmly gets noticed"	Jumping, door manners
Go to Mat	"This spot is a great place to be"	Doorbells, guests, meals

4.1 Game 1: Check-In

Goal: your dog looks at you, on their own or when you say their name.

1. Stand in a quiet room with treats. Don't say anything.
2. Wait. The moment your dog glances at your face, say "Yes!" and pay.
3. Toss the treat a few feet away, so your dog has to go get it and come back.
4. When they turn back to you, mark it and pay again.
5. Once your dog is doing this quickly, say their name once, in a happy voice, right as they start to look at you.

Ready to move on when: your dog looks up when you say their name about 8 times out of 10 at home.

Don't use your dog's name for scolding. It should always predict something good.

4.2 Game 2: Touch

Goal: your dog bumps their nose into your open hand. It's the simplest way to move a dog without pulling on them.

1. Hold your open hand a few inches from your dog's nose. Most dogs will sniff it.
2. The moment their nose touches your palm, say "Yes!" and pay from your other hand.
3. Pull your hand away, wait a moment, and offer it again. Repeat five times.
4. Now move your hand to a new spot, left or right or a bit higher.
5. When your dog touches reliably, say "Touch" just before you offer your hand.
6. Slowly move your hand further away so your dog takes a step or two to reach it.

Ready to move on when: your dog walks a few steps to touch your hand.

If your dog won't touch: rub a little treat on your palm, or tuck a treat between your fingers for the first few tries.

4.3 Game 3: Find It

Goal: when you say "Find it," your dog puts their nose down and searches for food. A dog can't jump or lunge very well while hunting for crumbs.

1. Say "Find it!" and drop one treat right by your feet.
2. Let your dog eat it. Repeat five times.
3. Now toss the treat a foot or two away.
4. Try a small handful of treats scattered on the floor.
5. Practice in the yard, in the driveway, and on walks.

Ready to move on when: your dog's head goes down as soon as you say it, even with a small distraction nearby.

Keep a few treats by the door. A scatter won't teach a new habit by itself, but it buys you time to get your dog out of trouble.

4.4 Game 4: Four on the Floor

Goal: your dog learns that keeping all paws down gets attention. Many dogs will start to offer a sit too.

1. Stand still with treats in a closed hand, held at your chest.
2. Wait. Don't talk. If your dog jumps, just stay still or step back.
3. The moment all four paws are on the floor, say "Yes!"
4. Drop the treat *on the floor* by their paws. This keeps their head down.
5. Repeat. Aim to pay before your dog even thinks about jumping.
6. When this is easy, wait for one second of four paws before you mark. Then two.

Ready to move on when: your dog stands or sits calmly for 5 seconds as you stand in front of them.

If your dog already has a solid sit, you can ask for it here. VCA suggests picking the goal greeting you prefer: sit, down, or simply standing. Any of these works. A dog can't jump and keep four paws down at the same time.

4.5 Game 5: Go to Mat

Goal: your dog goes to a mat and stays there until you release them. This is the best tool you have for doorbells and guests.

1. Put the mat on the floor. As soon as your dog looks at it, say "Yes!" and toss a treat *onto the mat*.
2. When they step on, mark and pay on the mat. Do this a few times.
3. Wait for your dog to step on without help. Mark and pay.
4. Now wait for them to sit or lie down. Pay several treats, one at a time, while they stay there.
5. Add your release word. Say "Free!" and toss a treat off the mat so your dog gets up.
6. Add the cue. Say "Mat" just before your dog goes to it.
7. Build time: 3 seconds, 5, 10, 20. Add distance from the mat one step at a time.

Ready to move on when: your dog goes to the mat on cue from about 6 feet away and waits 20 seconds with you nearby.

> **EXAMPLE: MOOSE THE MAT SKEPTIC (MADE UP)**
>
> Moose is a big, bouncy Lab mix. For the first two days he treats the mat like a place to grab food and run. His person keeps paying on the mat, one treat at a time, with little pauses in between. On day three, Moose flops down by himself. She pays him five treats in a row and calls it a day. Moose still can't hold it when someone walks by the window. That comes later.

4.6 Foundation troubleshooting

What's happening	Try this
My dog ignores the treats	Pay more (see the Payoff Menu), train before meals, or pick a calmer room. If your dog usually eats and now refuses food, tell your vet.
My dog gets wild around treats	Use lower-value food. Slow down. Toss treats away from you.
My dog nips my fingers	Toss or drop treats instead of hand-feeding. If it hurts or seems tense, talk to a pro.
My dog does it at home but nowhere else	That's normal. New places are harder. Practice in lots of small, easy places.
My dog does it only when I have treats	Keep treats in a pouch or on a shelf, not in your hand, and start paying from there. Chapter 9 covers how to fade treats.

PART 2 · CHAPTER 5

Pulling on the Leash

Walks are supposed to be the fun part of the day.

In this chapter

- Why dogs pull and why it's so hard to stop
- A four-stage plan from your hallway to a busy street
- What to do on the days you can't train

5.1 Why dogs pull

Dogs walk faster than people. Everything interesting is ahead of you. And pulling works: your dog leans into the leash, you follow, and they get to the good smell. Every step you take on a tight leash pays your dog for pulling.

Here's the part people find hard. AKC's advice is blunt about this: any time you let pulling work, you lose ground. That's why this chapter starts with a plan for walks you can't turn into training.

5.2 Two kinds of walks

Real life doesn't stop for training. You can't always spend 20 minutes on one block. So split your walks into two types.

	Training walk	Just-get-it-done walk
When	When you have time, ideally daily	When you're late, it's raining, or you're tired
Gear	Your regular training setup	A different setup if you can, such as a second harness or a different clip point
Goal	Practice and pay the Pause	Potty and a bit of fresh air, with as little pulling as you can manage
Rules	Tight leash means you stop	Pick a quiet route, scatter treats past triggers, keep it short

Different gear may help your dog tell the two walks apart. This isn't a perfect solution, but it's realistic. It's a lot better than giving up on training because you can't be perfect.

TRY THIS

On busy days, swap a walk for a game. A sniffing session in the yard, a stuffed food toy, or a scatter of kibble on the grass can give your dog something to do while you take a break from leash practice.

5.3 The four stages

Each stage uses the P.A.U.S.E. loop. Don't rush. A few minutes a day, a few days per stage, is a sensible place to start. Your dog may need more time at any stage.

Stage 1: The Reward Zone (indoors, no distractions)

Goal: your dog learns that the spot beside your leg is the best place in the world.

1. Put the leash on in your hallway or living room. Choose which side you'd like your dog to walk on. We'll say left.
2. Hold a few treats in your left hand, down by your thigh.
3. Take one step. If your dog is near your leg, say "Yes!" and pay right by your leg.
4. Take two steps. Mark and pay at your leg.
5. Walk in a slow circle or a figure eight. Pay every few steps while your dog is beside you.
6. Change speed and direction. Your dog should have to keep an eye on you.

Move on when: your dog stays near your leg for about 10 steps indoors.

Stage 2: Stop and Wait (quiet driveway or backyard)

Goal: your dog learns a tight leash stops everything and a slack leash starts it again. This is the classic method the AKC teaches.

1. Walk with the leash slack. Pay often, right at your leg.
2. The moment the leash goes tight, **stop**. Plant your feet. Don't pull back and don't say anything.
3. Wait. Your dog may stare ahead for a bit. That's fine.
4. The moment the leash goes slack, for any reason, say "Yes!"
5. Pay at your leg, so your dog has to come back to get it. Then start walking again.

Move on when: your dog notices the tight leash and comes back within a few seconds, most of the time.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Stopping isn't the same as yanking. Keep your arm soft. Your hand should stay close to your body. If your dog hits the end of the leash hard, you're moving too fast for this stage. Go back to a quieter spot.

Stage 3: U-Turns and Sniff Pay (your quiet street)

Goal: your dog learns to stay with you when you change direction, and that sniffing is earned with a loose leash.

1. Walk at a steady pace. Pay every 5 to 10 steps for a loose leash.

2. If your dog starts to surge ahead, say a cheerful "This way!" and turn around. The AKC's GoodDog! Helpline suggests this same idea.
3. When your dog catches up and the leash is slack, mark and pay.
4. Pick a spot ahead that your dog wants to sniff. Walk toward it slowly. If the leash stays loose, say "Go sniff!" and let them go. This is the best pay you've got, and it's free.
5. If the leash goes tight on the way, stop or turn around. Try again.

Move on when: you can walk a whole quiet block with few stops.

Stage 4: Real Life (other dogs, squirrels, people)

Goal: your dog can keep the leash loose near mild distractions.

1. Use your best pay. This is the hardest job your dog has.
2. **See it first.** AKC advises getting your dog's attention *before* they notice the distraction. Scan ahead. It makes a big difference.
3. Increase distance. Cross the street or step into a driveway. Distance makes everything easier.
4. As the distraction passes, use Check-In or Touch. Pay often. Or use "Find it" and scatter a few treats.
5. Once it's past, go back to regular pay. Give your dog a sniff as a thank-you.

Move on when: keep working here. This stage goes on for a long time, and that's fine.

5.4 How to hold the leash

- Hold the leash in the hand *away* from your dog, with a little slack.
- Keep the hand near your body, around your belly button. This gives you a steady anchor.
- Never wrap the leash around your wrist or fingers. A strong dog can injure you.
- Keep your treats in the hand closest to your dog, so you pay at the right spot.
- Keep your own body relaxed. AKC points out that dogs pick up on your emotions through the leash.

5.5 Pulling troubleshooting

What's happening	Try this
We stop so often we barely go anywhere	You're probably at too hard a stage. Go back one. Walk in a quieter place. Pay more often.
My dog is wild at the start of each walk	Practice a calm start. Clip the leash on, wait for four paws, open the door a bit, pay, close it, repeat. Let your dog sniff the yard before you ask for anything.
My dog bites or tugs the leash	Stay calm and stop moving. Offer a toy to carry, or use "Find it." AKC has a guide on this. If the mouthing becomes hard or tense, get help.
My dog stops and won't move	Check for fear or pain. Don't drag. Wait, then encourage them in a happy voice. If this is new, see your vet.

What's happening	Try this
My dog walks well until the end of the block	That's where the fun starts. Go back to paying more often at that spot.
My dog zigzags in front of me	Pay right at your leg, on one side only. Slow down. Be careful not to trip.
It works in the morning but not at night	That's common. More dogs and more smells may be around. Train at easy times first.

5.6 When it's more than pulling

Some dogs don't just pull. They lunge, bark, and spin when they see other dogs or people. This is often called **leash reactivity**. AKC notes that reactivity and aggression are not the same thing, but both deserve careful handling.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> If your dog lunges, snarls, or seems upset or scared, this chapter may not be enough. Use distance. Avoid the trigger where you can. Don't force your dog closer. Don't punish. Talk to your vet and a qualified reward-based professional. See Chapter 11.

PART 2 · CHAPTER 6

Barking Too Much

Barking is how dogs talk. We just want a shorter conversation.

In this chapter

- How to figure out why your dog barks
- Plans for the door, the window, and "Hey, look at me!"
- Which kinds of barking need a professional

6.1 The goal is less, not zero

Dogs bark. It's normal, and a dog who never barks isn't a realistic goal. What we're aiming for is barking that's **shorter, less frequent, and easy to end.** A dog who barks twice at the doorbell and then goes to their mat is a win.

The biggest mistake with barking is treating all of it the same way. The doorbell bark and the "I'm scared" bark need different plans. So before you do anything else, work out which kind you've got.

6.2 Find your dog's bark type

This table draws on the ASPCA's barking guide and VCA's advice. Find the row that sounds most like your dog. Many dogs have more than one type.

Type	What it looks like	Main plan
Alert or territory	At the door, the window, the fence. Body forward. Often at sounds or people passing.	Block the view. Sections 6.5 and 6.6.
Greeting	Happy barking at people or dogs. Loose body, wagging.	Calm greetings. Section 6.5 and Chapter 7.
Attention or demand	Looks right at you and barks. Stops when you respond.	Stop paying for it. Section 6.7.
Excitement or frustration	Before walks or meals, or when they can't reach something.	Teach the Pause before the fun starts. Section 6.8.
Boredom	Long, repetitive barking in the yard or when there's nothing to do.	Add activity and company. Section 6.9.
Fear	Backing away, tail low, ears back, trembling.	**See a professional.** Section 6.11.
Alone-time distress	Only when left alone, often with pacing, drooling, or damage near doors.	**See your vet.** Section 6.11.

Type	What it looks like	Main plan
Compulsive	Repetitive barking, often with pacing or spinning, hard to interrupt.	**See your vet or a behaviorist.** Section 6.11.
Medical	New barking or whining, especially in older dogs. Could be pain, hearing loss, or confusion.	**See your vet.** Section 6.11.

6.3 Keep a three-day Bark Log

You may think your dog barks "all the time." When you write it down, a pattern usually shows up. Use the Bark Log in the Appendix for three days. For each episode, jot down:

- **When** did it happen?
- **What set it off?** A person, a sound, a dog, you picking up your keys?
- **How long** did it last?
- **What happened next?** What did you do? Did the trigger leave?

> **EXAMPLE: PEPPER'S LOG (MADE UP)**
>
> Pepper's family thinks she barks all day. After three days the log shows 14 episodes. Nine are at the front window between 3 and 4 p.m., when kids walk home from school. Three are at the doorbell. Two are at her humans during dinner. Now they've got a plan: close the blinds at 2:45, give her a food toy at 3:00, and work on the doorbell in short sessions. Dinner barking gets its own plan.

6.4 First step for every bark: stop the rehearsals

This is the **P** in P.A.U.S.E. Every bark session is practice. The more your dog practices, the better they get. Start with these changes today:

- [ ] **Block the view.** ASPCA suggests opaque film on low windows. Curtains or moving the couch away from the window also work.
- [ ] **Add sound cover.** ASPCA and VCA both mention background noise. Try a fan or quiet music.
- [ ] **Don't leave your dog alone in the yard** for long stretches if they bark at passersby.
- [ ] **Don't cheer it on.** ASPCA says to avoid things like "Who's there?" or rushing to the window. It tells your dog there's something to bark about.
- [ ] **Don't yell.** VCA notes that punishment seldom works and can raise anxiety. To your dog, yelling can sound like you're joining in.
- [ ] **Stay consistent.** ASPCA warns against punishing some barks and praising others. Everyone needs the same rules.

6.5 The Door Plan

The doorbell is one of the hardest moments in your dog's day. It predicts excitement. We're going to change what it predicts. The goal is simple: **the bell means "run to your mat and get paid."**

Your dog needs to know Go to Mat first (Section 4.5).

Stage 1: Mat by the door, no bell

1. Move the mat to a spot in view of the door, but several feet back.
2. Practice Go to Mat there. Pay well.
3. Touch the doorknob. Pay your dog on the mat. Rattle it. Pay. Open the door a crack. Pay. Close it.

Stage 2: Fake bell, low volume

1. Record your doorbell on your phone, or find a similar sound.
2. Play it very quietly. If your dog doesn't bark, say "Yes!" and pay on the mat.
3. Repeat in short sessions. Slowly raise the volume over several days.
4. If your dog barks, the sound was too loud. Turn it down.

Stage 3: Real bell, family helper

1. Ask a family member to step outside and ring the bell or knock.
2. Say "Mat" right after the bell. Walk your dog there with you the first few times.
3. Pay several small treats on the mat.
4. Your helper comes in calmly, ignores your dog, and walks through.
5. Do three or four rings per session. Then stop.

Stage 4: Real guests

1. Plan ahead. Text your guest: "Please text me when you arrive instead of ringing the bell." This lets you control the first few visits.
2. Have a stuffed food toy ready on the mat, or use a gate if your dog isn't ready.
3. Chapter 7 takes it from here.

> **TRY THIS: THE TWO-BARK RULE**
>
> For dogs who alert to the door, it's fair to let them give a bark or two. Then say your dog's name in a happy voice, and pay them for coming to you. You're saying "Thanks, I've got it." You aren't trying to stop them from alerting. You're teaching them what comes next.

6.6 The Window and Yard Plan

Blocking the view is your first move. But your dog will still hear and see things sometimes. Here's how to teach them that passing people aren't a problem.

1. **Prep:** Set up in a room with a partial view. Keep your dog on a leash or a light drag line if they tend to rush.
2. **Ask:** When someone is far away, watch your dog. They notice the person, and they aren't barking yet. That's your moment.

3. **Use your marker:** Say "Yes!" while your dog is looking and quiet.
4. **Serve:** Pay with a good treat. Pay a few more times as the person passes.
5. **Extend:** Slowly work closer to the window, over many sessions.

With practice, many dogs start to look at the passerby and then look at you, expecting pay. That look is gold. Pay it every time at first.

Too late, and your dog is already barking? Don't scold. Calmly walk over, use a happy voice or Touch, and lead your dog away from the window. Pay when they're quiet. Close the blinds. Next time, try to catch them sooner.

6.7 The Attention Bark Plan

This is the bark that looks you in the eye. You sit down to work and your dog starts: "Hey. Hey! HEY!"

Both ASPCA and VCA are clear. Any response can pay for this bark, even a look or a scolding. VCA stresses that you shouldn't reward barking with attention, even occasionally.

1. **Check real needs first.** Does your dog need to go out? Is the water bowl empty? Is your dog in pain? Handle needs before you ignore anything.
2. **Stop paying.** When the demand barking starts, go still. Look away. Don't talk. If you need to, step out of the room for a few seconds.
3. **Pay the Pause.** The moment your dog stops, count one second, then turn back and give attention, or say "Yes!" and pay.
4. **Beat your dog to it.** Pay your dog for being quiet *before* they start. Drop a treat while they're lying calmly near you. Do it often at first.
5. **Teach a better way to ask.** ASPCA suggests offering another behavior. A sit, a nose touch, or going to a mat can become your dog's polite "Excuse me."

> **WATCH OUT: IT MAY GET WORSE FIRST**
>
> When a behavior that used to work stops working, dogs often try harder. Expect louder barking for a while. If you give in at that point, you've taught your dog that *louder* is what works. Decide before you start that you can hold steady. This plan is for attention barking only. **Never ignore a dog who is scared or in distress.**

6.8 The Excitement Bark Plan

Barking while you pick up the leash? Barking at the food bowl? ASPCA recommends teaching impulse control before your dog gets fun things. In our language, the **Pause** opens the door to the fun.

When your dog barks at...	Do this	The payoff is...
The leash	Pick it up. If they bark, put it down and wait. When they're quiet for a second, pick it up again. Build up slowly.	The walk starts

When your dog barks at...	Do this	The payoff is...
The food bowl	Hold the bowl at chest height. If they bark, pause. Quiet? Lower it a bit. Barking? Stop lowering.	The bowl reaches the floor
The car	Stop moving when barking starts. Keep going when it stops. Ask your vet or a trainer if car barking is intense. Use a safe restraint.	The trip continues
A toy you're holding	Freeze. When they're quiet, throw it.	The game goes on

6.9 The Boredom Plan

A dog with nothing to do makes their own entertainment. ASPCA and VCA both recommend more exercise, mental work, and company for these dogs.

- [ ] Feed one meal from a puzzle toy or a stuffed food toy
- [ ] Scatter kibble in the grass, so your dog has to sniff for dinner
- [ ] Add a sniff walk where your dog sets the pace
- [ ] Bring your dog inside rather than leaving them out alone
- [ ] Rotate toys. Put some away and bring them back next week
- [ ] Do one 5-minute training game when you get home

6.10 Teaching "Quiet"

A "Quiet" cue is handy once you've worked on the causes above. It's not a stop button for fear or panic. It's a way to tell your dog "That's enough, come get paid."

1. Wait for a moment when your dog barks at something minor.
2. Wait for them to take a breath. Say "Yes!" the moment they stop, and pay.
3. Do this several times over a few days. Your dog starts to learn that stopping pays.
4. Now say "Quiet" in a calm voice just before you expect the barking to stop.
5. Pay after one second of quiet. Then two. Then three. Then five.
6. Keep your voice calm. Say it once, not five times.

Never hold your dog's mouth shut, and never tie it closed. ASPCA warns against keeping dogs muzzled for long periods or leaving them unsupervised in a muzzle.

6.11 Barking that needs a professional

THIS BOOK ISN'T ENOUGH FOR THESE

- **Barking only when alone,** especially with destruction, drooling, pacing, or escape attempts. This may be separation anxiety. ASPCA says moderate to severe cases call for help from a veterinary behaviorist or certified behaviorist. Do not punish it. Do not crate a dog who panics in a crate.
- **Barking from fear,** with shaking, hiding, or backing away. Don't ignore it, and don't force your dog to "face it."
- **Barking with lunging or snarling** at people or dogs.
- **Repetitive barking** that you can't interrupt, with pacing or spinning.
- **New barking in an older dog,** or barking at night. ASPCA points to hearing loss, pain, and brain changes as possible causes.

Start with your vet. Bring your Bark Log, and a phone video if you can get one.

6.12 If the neighbors have complained

This is stressful, and it's okay to feel embarrassed. A few things can help while you work on it:

- **Talk to them.** Try: "I know the barking has been a problem, and I'm working on it." People tend to be more patient when they know you're trying.
- **Ask when it happens.** Your neighbor may hear barking while you're out. That's useful information, and it may point to distress when your dog is alone.
- **Record while you're out.** A cheap pet camera or an old phone can show you what you've been missing.
- **Bring your dog in.** Yard barking is usually the first thing to fix.
- **Check local rules.** Noise rules vary by city and building.

6.13 Barking troubleshooting

What's happening	Try this
My dog barks and then comes for a treat, as if barking earned it	Add a gap. Wait for two or three seconds of quiet, and ask for a Touch or a Sit, then pay.
My dog stays quiet for me but barks when I leave the room	Check whether it happens only when you're gone. If your dog seems upset, read Section 6.11.
My dog is too worked up to eat	You're too close to the trigger. Move away. A dog who can't eat is telling you something.
It's better at home but not in the yard	Normal. Start again at Stage 1 in the yard, on a long leash.
Barking got worse after I started	For attention barking, this is common. For anything else, make it easier, or ask a pro.

PART 2 · CHAPTER 7

Jumping on People

Your dog just wants to say hi to your face. Let's give them a better way.

In this chapter

- Why jumping keeps working, even when people push your dog off
- A step-by-step greeting ladder
- How to coach guests, kids, and strangers on the street

7.1 Why dogs jump

Faces are interesting. Puppies learn early that jumping gets them closer to faces, and it gets attention. And we've taught it without meaning to. We scoop up small puppies. We pet them when they paw at our legs. Then the puppy grows into a 70-pound dog, and suddenly it's a problem. The dog hasn't changed. Only the rules changed.

Remember from Chapter 1: for many dogs, being pushed, scolded, or grabbed still counts as attention. So the old fixes can make jumping stronger. Kneeing a dog in the chest isn't only unkind. ASPCA notes that it can hurt and confuse your dog, or make them jump more frantically.

The fix has two parts: **jumping gets nothing, and four paws get everything.**

7.2 The three house rules

Put these on the fridge. Everyone in your home has to follow them. VCA is clear that it can make things worse if some people allow jumping and others don't.

1. **Four paws on the floor before anyone says hello.**
2. **If your dog jumps, attention stops.** Stand up straight, turn away or step back, and stay silent. No pushing, no "off," no eye contact. As soon as all paws are down, attention comes back.
3. **Pay low.** Drop treats on the floor, not up at chest level.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Skip the idea that you should just "turn your back" and wait forever. Turning away only removes the reward. It doesn't teach your dog what to do. You need the second half too: paying for the Pause, fast and often.

7.3 The Coming Home routine

Most jumping practice happens when you walk in the door. So this is where you can make the most progress, with no one else involved.

1. **Prep:** Keep a small cup of treats outside the door or just inside it, on a shelf.
2. **Enter calmly.** Stay low-key. Big excited hellos can pump your dog up.
3. **Pay before they jump.** As you come in, scatter a few treats on the floor. Say "Find it!" This gives your dog something to do with all that energy.
4. **Greet low.** While their paws are down, crouch or lean a bit, pet their chest, and keep your voice soft.
5. **If they jump,** stand up, step back, wait a moment, and try again.
6. **Extend:** Over time, wait for a sit or a calm stand before you drop the treats.

7.4 The Greeting Ladder

Don't start with your overexcited aunt. Start with an easy person and work your way up. Stay on each rung until it's easy.

Rung	Who	Setup	Your dog's job
1	You	Quiet room	Four on the Floor for 5 seconds
2	Family member	Your dog is on leash. You hold it, and you pay.	Stay down while the person walks up
3	Family member, more excited	Same setup. They talk in a happy voice.	Stay down through happy talk
4	A calm friend	On leash, in a quiet place. Friend follows your script.	Stay down for a treat and a chest rub
5	A calm friend at the door	Mat or gate in use	Go to mat, then greet on leash
6	New people	Mat or gate in use, leash on	Same
7	Excited people and kids	Gate is up. Only if your dog is ready and it's safe.	Stay calm behind the gate, or greet with help

How a practice greeting works

1. Hold the leash so your dog can reach the floor comfortably, but can't quite reach the person's chest. VCA suggests holding it just taut enough, without pulling or jerking.
2. The person walks toward your dog, slowly. As they approach, you pay your dog for staying down, before any jump can start.
3. If your dog gets up on their back legs, the person stops, turns, and walks a few steps away.
4. When your dog is back to four paws, they try again.

5. When your dog can hold four paws as the person arrives, the person gives a treat low, and a short, calm pet on the chest.
6. Then the person leaves. Short and sweet. Do it three or four times and stop.

7.5 The Guest Plan

You've got people coming over, and your dog isn't ready for this yet. That's normal. Here's your plan for real life. AKC suggests using a leash, gate, crate, or a mat during this phase, so your dog doesn't keep practicing the jump.

When	What to do
Before they arrive	Take your dog for a sniff walk or play a brain game. Set up the gate or the mat. Put treats by the door. Text your guest the script below.
When they arrive	Your dog is behind a gate, on the leash, or in another room with a food toy. Greet your guest and let them come in and sit down. Let the excitement fade.
After a few minutes	If your dog is calm, bring them out on leash. Let them sniff the guest. Guest ignores them at first.
Greeting	Pay your dog for paws on the floor. If they stay calm, the guest can drop a treat low and pet the chest briefly.
During the visit	Offer a mat and a chew near you. Pay calm behavior. Take your dog out if they get too wound up.

WATCH OUT

Don't force a greeting. If your dog leans away, looks away, or lowers their body, they don't want to say hello right now. VCA advises against letting anyone touch a dog showing those signs. Give your dog a safe space instead.

7.6 Coaching your guests

This is the hardest part for many families. People love to say, "Oh, I don't mind! I love dogs!" Then they undo a week of work. You need a script, and you need to be okay using it.

A text to send before they arrive:
"We're teaching [dog's name] to greet people politely. Could you help? When you come in, please ignore [him/her] at first: no eye contact, no talking, no petting. If [he/she] jumps, just turn away. Once [he/she] has four paws on the floor, I'll tell you when to say hi. Thanks so much!"

What to say at the door when someone says "It's okay, I don't mind":
"Thanks, but we're in training! Please wait a sec until [he/she] is calm."

On the sidewalk, when a stranger reaches out:
"Sorry, we're practicing. Not today, but thank you!"

You're allowed to say no. You're your dog's advocate.

7.7 Jumping on walks

ASPCA's advice for dogs who jump on walks or at the leash is simple: stay calm and ask for a sit, or wait for four paws on the floor. Then pay. Give treats every few seconds while your dog holds it. Here's how to put that together:

1. See the person coming, and step off to the side.
2. Ask for a Sit, or use Check-In. Or scatter treats with "Find it."
3. Pay every few seconds while the person goes by.
4. You don't need to greet everyone. Many dogs do better when not every human means a greeting.
5. When your dog is ready, use a friend to practice saying hi on a walk.

7.8 Kids and older adults

SAFETY COMES FIRST

A jumping dog can knock over a child or an older adult, even with no bad intent. Until your dog is reliable:

- Use a gate or leash when young kids, older adults, or anyone unsteady on their feet comes over
- Don't use small children as practice partners
- Always have an adult actively watching dogs and kids together
- Teach kids to stand still and fold their arms if a dog jumps, instead of running or squealing
- Give your dog a safe spot where kids don't follow

If your dog is mouthing hard, or if you've seen stiffness, growling, or snapping around kids, keep them apart and contact a professional.

7.9 Jumping troubleshooting

What's happening	Try this
My dog jumps and bites at my clothes	Stay still, then step behind a gate for a moment. Drop treats to refocus. Keep a toy by the door for your dog to carry. If it's hard or looks tense, get help.
It's fine with family but not with guests	Go back to rung 4 on the ladder with a calm friend. Use your gate meanwhile.
My guest keeps encouraging it	Use the gate or a separate room for that person's visit. It's a management problem, not a training one.
My dog sits, gets a treat, then jumps	Pay more often and lower. Drop two or three treats in a row. Finish the greeting sooner.
My small dog or puppy jumps	Use the same plan. Small dogs can trip people. For puppies, keep it short and read Section 10.1.

PART 3 · CHAPTER 8

The 14-Day Pause Plan

A clear daily structure. Your dog sets the actual pace.

In this chapter

- How the plan works and how to adjust it
- What to do before Day 1
- A daily card for each of the 14 days

8.1 How the plan works

This plan gives you a simple job for each day. That's all it is. **It is a structure, not a promise.** Fourteen days of practice won't finish the job for most dogs, and it isn't meant to. What it can do is give you the habits, the skills, and a way of working that you can keep using.

Each day has up to three short sessions of about 5 minutes. Days 1 to 3 build your foundation. After that, each day has one **Walk** session, one **Quiet** session, and one **Greet** session.

If your situation is...	Adjust like this
You only have one problem	Do Days 1 to 3 as written. After that, do your one session twice a day and skip the rest.
You have only 5 minutes a day	Do one session a day. Treat each "day" as three real days. It takes longer, and that's okay.
Your dog is finding it hard	Stay on the same day until it's easy. You can repeat a day as many times as you need.
Your dog is flying through it	Keep going, but don't skip stages. Easy steps are quick to get through and they build confidence.
You missed some days	Go back one day and start again from there.
You've got a puppy, a rescue, or a senior	Read Chapter 10 first. Shorten the sessions if you need to.

8.2 Before Day 1

This takes about 30 minutes. It makes everything else easier.

- [ ] Read Chapters 2 and 3 and the warning box in Read This First
- [ ] Book a vet visit if your dog's behavior has changed or if it's been a while since their last checkup
- [ ] Get your gear ready: leash, harness, treat pouch, mat, gate

- [ ] Build your Payoff Menu (Appendix C)
- [ ] Cut a batch of treats and store them in the fridge
- [ ] Print or copy the family rules (Appendix B)
- [ ] Make a plan for blocking the door and the window
- [ ] Pick three session times that fit your real day
- [ ] Tell your family what you're doing, and ask them to read the rules

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If you keep to just one habit this week, make it this one: **don't let the old behavior pay.** Gate the door. Close the curtains. Stop moving when the leash goes tight. Everything else builds on that.

8.3 The daily cards

Each card tells you what to do. Tick off each session. Then write down the best moment of the day. It sounds silly, but on hard days you'll be glad you did it.

Day 1: Say Yes	Foundation
Session 1	Charge up your marker. Ten repeats of "Yes!" then a treat (Section 3.5).
Session 2	Check-In game in a quiet room (Section 4.1). Twenty treats, then stop.
Session 3	The Pause hunt. Ten treats in your pocket. Catch calm moments all evening (Section 2.1).
Life rule	Family rules go on the fridge. Start the Bark Log. Close the curtains at your dog's busiest bark times.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 2: Nose Work	Foundation
Session 1	Touch game (Section 4.2). Stop after about 15 touches.
Session 2	Find It game (Section 4.3). Start at your feet, then toss a foot or two.
Session 3	Check-In in a new room. Say your dog's name once, then pay.
Life rule	Keep treats by the door. Scatter them when you come home. Keep the Bark Log going.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 3: Paws and Mat	Foundation
Session 1	Four on the Floor (Section 4.4). Pay low and pay fast.
Session 2	Go to Mat, steps 1 to 3 (Section 4.5). Toss treats onto the mat.
Session 3	Play your dog's favorite game of the three so far. End on a win.
Life rule	Finish the Bark Log. Use it to find your dog's bark type (Section 6.2). Any fear or panic? Stop and read Section 6.11.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 4: First Real Pauses	Getting started
Walk	Stage 1, Reward Zone, indoors. Steps at your leg, paying often.
Quiet	Door Plan, Stage 1. Mat in view of the door. Pay while you touch the knob.
Greet	Start the Coming Home routine each time you walk in (Section 7.3).
Life rule	Training walks only if you have time. Otherwise, a short just-get-it-done walk.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 5: Pick Your Bark Plan	Getting started
Walk	Stage 1 again. Add turns and changes of speed. Aim for 10 steps at your leg.
Quiet	Do one session of the plan that fits your bark type: window, attention, or excitement (Sections 6.6 to 6.8).
Greet	Rung 2. A family member walks up while you hold the leash and pay.
Life rule	Mat practice: add time. Five seconds, then ten.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 6: Slack Means Go	Getting started
Walk	Stage 2, Stop and Wait, in your yard or a quiet driveway. Stop on tight, go on slack.
Quiet	Door Plan, Stage 2. Play the recorded bell at low volume. Pay quiet on the mat.
Greet	Rung 2 again. Practice three or four short greetings, then stop.
Life rule	Add a food toy or scatter feed for one meal.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 7: Easy Day and Check-In	Review
Walk	A slow sniff walk, wherever your dog can relax. Pay any loose leash, but ask for nothing hard.
Quiet	No drills. Pay quiet moments when you notice them.
Greet	Coming Home routine only.
Review	Fill in the Day 7 Review in the Appendix. Decide: carry on, or repeat Days 4 to 6.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 8: Longer Pauses	Building
Walk	Stage 2 for 5 minutes, then a quiet stretch on your street. Pay often.
Quiet	Door Plan, Stage 2. Raise the volume a little. Only go up if your dog stays quiet.
Greet	Rung 3. Your family member uses a happy voice as they walk up.
Life rule	Mat practice with one small distraction, like you walking around the room.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 9: Sniff Pay	Building
Walk	Stage 3. Pay every 5 to 10 steps. Let your dog earn one or two "Go sniff!" breaks.
Quiet	Teach "stopping pays" (Section 6.10, steps 1 to 3). Use minor barks only.
Greet	Rung 3 with a mat. Your dog goes to the mat, then a family member comes over to say hi.
Life rule	Add one 5-minute brain game after work or school.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 10: The Doorbell Helper	Building
Walk	Stage 3 with U-turns. "This way!" whenever your dog surges ahead.
Quiet	Door Plan, Stage 3. A family member rings the bell three times. Walk your dog to the mat. Pay well.
Greet	Rung 4. A calm friend or a family member acting like a guest. Leash on.
Life rule	Send your guest text ahead of any visit (Section 7.6).
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 11: Add the Cues	Building
Walk	Try a whole quiet block. Pay less often if things are going well.
Quiet	Door Plan, Stage 3 again. Say "Quiet" just as your dog stops (Section 6.10, steps 4 and 5).
Greet	Rung 5 with a family member. Mat or gate in place, then a greeting on leash.
Life rule	Check your calories. Trim meals if you're using a lot of treats.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 12: First Real-World Tries	Real life
Walk	Stage 4. One mild distraction at a big distance. See it first. Pay as it passes.
Quiet	Window Plan, one short session. Pay your dog for noticing and staying quiet.
Greet	Rung 5 with a calm friend, if you can arrange it.
Life rule	If it's too hard, you aren't behind. Go back a step and keep your dog winning.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 13: Dress Rehearsal	Real life
Walk	One real walk. Use best pay. Keep it short and end while it's going well.
Quiet	One real bell or knock, planned with a helper. Stay calm and use the mat.
Greet	One planned visit with a calm person. Use your gate, leash, and script.
Life rule	Write down one thing that went better than a week ago.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

Day 14: Review and Next Steps	Review
Walk	A relaxed sniff walk. Enjoy it.
Quiet	Pay quiet moments as they happen. Nothing else.
Greet	Coming Home routine only.
Review	Fill in the Day 14 Review. Choose your next plan from Chapter 9. Repeat any stage that isn't easy yet.
Done today: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3	Best moment: _____

8.4 Reading your results

Here's how to read what you see at the end of Day 14.

What you see	What it likely means	Next step
Clear progress in easy places	A good sign. Skills start at home and spread slowly.	Move on to the plan in Chapter 9.
Good days and bad days	Normal. Learning isn't a straight line.	Look for patterns: sleep, visitors, skipped sessions.
No change in one area	The stage may be too hard, or the old habit still pays somewhere.	Go back to the Prep step. Who's still paying for it?
Things are getting worse	With attention barking, this can be temporary. Otherwise, something may be off.	Stop pushing. Talk to your vet or a professional.
You see fear, panic, or aggression	This is beyond the scope of this book.	Go to Chapter 11 now.

PART 3 · CHAPTER 9

After Day 14: Making It Stick

The plan ends. The habit doesn't have to.

In this chapter

- A six-week follow-on plan
- How to use fewer treats without losing the behavior
- What to do when things slip

9.1 Weeks 3 to 8

This is where your dog learns that the rules apply everywhere. Do three or four short sessions a week, plus your everyday walks. Each row is a target, not a test. Move at your dog's speed.

Week	Walk	Quiet	Greet
3	Stage 3 on two different quiet streets	Stage 3 of the Door Plan with a friend ringing the bell	Rung 5 with two different calm friends
4	Stage 4 at a distance, once per walk	Build "Quiet" up to 5 seconds	Coming Home routine with less food
5	A new neighborhood at a quiet time	Window practice with blinds half open	Rung 6 with a new person, on leash
6	Stage 4 at a slightly shorter distance	A real delivery, planned if you can	A short guest visit using your full plan
7	A busier time on a familiar route	Mat stay during a doorbell, 20 seconds	Say hi to a neighbor on a walk
8	Sniff-focused walk, use real-life pay	Review: which times still need blocking?	Review: who still needs coaching?

9.2 How to fade the treats

A common worry goes like this: "Will I have to carry treats forever?" Not as many, no. But you should always pay for hard things. You go to work for a paycheck, after all. Here's how to reduce food slowly.

Phase	What it looks like	When to use it
1. Every time	Each Pause gets a mark and a treat.	New skills, new places, hard moments
2. Most times	Pay most Pauses, but skip a few at random.	Once your dog does it about 8 out of 10 times

Phase	What it looks like	When to use it
3. Surprise pay	Food sometimes. Other times praise, a game, or a sniff.	Once the skill is solid in that place
4. Real-life pay	The walk goes on. The door opens. The guest says hi.	Most of daily life

Fade one place at a time. Your dog might be at Phase 4 on your street and at Phase 1 outside the dog park. That's fine. If the behavior starts to slip, go back a phase for a while.

9.3 Three small daily habits

1. **Pay one surprise Pause a day.** Notice something calm and reward it.
2. **Walk the first minute right.** Start each walk with a few steps of practice at your leg.
3. **Use the door routine every time.** Your own arrival is free practice.

9.4 When things slip

Every dog has setbacks. Your well-behaved dog will pull like a truck on some random Tuesday. Here are common reasons and what to do about them.

Possible reason	What to do
Your dog is a teenager (often somewhere from about 6 months to 2 years, depending on the dog)	Go back to easier steps. Pay more. Stay patient. This is common.
Life changed: a move, a new baby, new work hours	Add more routine. Go back to more management for a while.
Seasons changed: more kids outside, more squirrels, more fireworks	Adjust your routes and times. Block views again.
You got busy and stopped paying	Restart with a few easy sessions. Your dog hasn't forgotten.
Someone's undoing it: a dog walker or a relative	Share the rules page. Keep it friendly.
Your dog might not feel well	See your vet, especially if the change is sudden.

> **TRY THIS: THE THREE-DAY RESET**
>
> When things slide, spend three days on the basics. Tighten up your Prep. Go back to Phase 1 pay. Practice only in easy places. Most of the time, your dog will return to where they were sooner than it took to learn the first time. If not, ask a professional for a fresh set of eyes.

PART 3 · CHAPTER 10

Your Dog, Your Home

How to adjust the plan to fit real life.

In this chapter

- Changes for puppies, rescues, and seniors
- Big dogs, small dogs, and more than one dog
- Apartments, kids, and busy schedules

10.1 Puppies

- **Keep it very short.** One to three minutes at a time is plenty for many young puppies.
- **Don't expect much self-control.** Puppies get tired, bitey, and silly. Plan for naps.
- **Prevent, prevent, prevent.** It's a lot easier to keep a habit from forming than to fix one later.
- **Ask your vet** where it's safe to walk before vaccines are complete, and about safe socialization.
- **Puppy mouthing is common.** ASPCA has a good guide. If it seems intense or angry, talk to your vet.

10.2 Rescues and newly adopted dogs

- **Give them time.** New homes are a lot to take in. Spend the first days on routine, rest, and getting to know each other.
- **Start with Pause hunts and Find It.** They're easy and build trust.
- **Move slowly with handling.** Let your dog come to you.
- **Don't assume a sad backstory.** Many fearful dogs simply missed out on early experiences. What matters is what you see now.
- **If you see strong fear or any sign of aggression,** go to Chapter 11.

10.3 Senior dogs

- **See your vet first.** ASPCA points out that many behavior changes in older dogs have medical causes, such as pain, hearing or vision loss, and cognitive decline. Don't assume it's just old age.
- **Use hand signals** if hearing is going. A thumbs up can work as a marker.
- **Keep it comfortable.** Use non-slip mats, short sessions, and no repeated sits if your dog's hips hurt.
- **Old dogs can learn.** They may just need more time and softer treats.

10.4 Small dogs

- **Same rules.** Small dogs deserve to be taught, not just picked up.
- **Watch the calories.** Tufts gives the example of a 10-pound dog needing about 300 calories a day. That's a limit of around 30 calories in treats. Cut treats tiny, or use part of a meal.
- **Use a harness.** Small necks are delicate. Talk to your vet about what fits best.
- **Don't lift your dog up as a reward for jumping.** Ask for four paws first, if you want to pick them up.

10.5 Big, strong dogs

- **Safety first.** If your dog can pull you off your feet, start in a fenced yard or a quiet place. Have a well-fitted harness and a sturdy leash.
- **Stay out of danger.** Avoid icy paths and busy streets while training.
- **Don't walk a dog you can't hold.** Ask for help from a stronger adult or a qualified trainer. Don't let kids walk a strong dog alone.
- **Don't reach for a prong collar.** That's when many owners are told they need one. Use management and a reward-based pro instead.

10.6 More than one dog

- **Train one dog at a time.** Put the other behind a gate with a chew.
- **Walk one at a time** at first, if you can. Walk them together only once each dog is doing well alone.
- **Watch out for barking chains.** ASPCA notes that dogs can start barking because other dogs do. Bring them in and work on each dog alone.
- **Feed and treat with care.** Keep space between dogs when food is out, especially if there's any tension.

10.7 Apartments

- **Hallways are hard.** Doors, neighbors, and echoes are a lot to cope with. Scatter treats in the elevator or stairs if your dog is calm enough to eat.
- **Use sound cover.** A fan or quiet music can mask hallway noise.
- **Put your mat away from the front door** at first.
- **Use a rug or runner.** Soft footing can reduce noise and slipping during practice.
- **Add potty trips** before training. Your dog can't focus with a full bladder.

10.8 Homes with kids

- **Adults do the training first.** Older kids can join in when a skill is solid, with an adult nearby.
- **Give kids simple jobs.** They can toss treats during Find It, or be the "greeter" in rung 2, if the dog is calm.
- **Protect the dog's space.** No bothering a dog who's eating, sleeping, or on their mat.

- **Always supervise.** AVMA notes that we can't predict whether a dog will bite based on size or breed. Any dog may bite if they're worried enough.

10.9 Short on time

Everyone's busy. Try these ways to fit training into the day you already have.

You're already…	Add this	Time
Waiting for the coffee	Check-In or Touch, five repeats	30 seconds
Feeding your dog	Bowl-lowering game (Section 6.8)	1 minute
Coming home	Coming Home routine	1 minute
Watching TV	Mat practice during ads, or the Pause hunt	3 minutes
Starting a walk	First minute of Reward Zone steps	1 minute
Brushing your teeth	Scatter a few treats on the mat beforehand	2 minutes

PART 4 · CHAPTER 11

When to Call a Vet or a Pro

Asking for help isn't failing. It's often the kindest thing you can do.

In this chapter

- Clear red flags and who to call
- What to do after a bite
- How to find a good trainer and avoid a bad one

11.1 The red-flag table

Some problems shouldn't be handled with a book. AVSAB's guide says that if you're seeing fear, anxiety, or aggression, you should contact a veterinarian with advanced behavior knowledge, a veterinary behaviorist, or a credentialed behavior consultant.

What you see	Why it matters	Who to call first
Biting, snapping, or attempted bites at people or animals	Safety risk. ASPCA calls aggression the most serious behavior problem and notes that even experienced pros can get bitten.	Your vet, then a veterinary behaviorist or certified behavior consultant
Growling, stiffening, or guarding over food, toys, or spaces	Warning signs that can lead to a bite	Your vet, then a behavior professional
Strong fear: shaking, hiding, trying to escape, refusing to walk	Pushing through fear can make it worse. AVSAB advises against flooding.	Your vet, then a behavior professional
Severe separation anxiety: destruction, self-injury, non-stop barking, house soiling when alone	This is panic, not spite. Moderate to severe cases need expert help.	Your vet, then a veterinary behaviorist or a certified behaviorist
Sudden change in behavior at any age	Pain and illness can cause it.	Your vet, soon
New accidents in the house in a house-trained dog	ASPCA says a medical cause should be checked first.	Your vet
Night pacing, confusion, or getting lost at home in an older dog	Could be pain, illness, or cognitive decline.	Your vet
Repetitive behaviors like spinning, tail chasing, or constant licking	May be medical or compulsive.	Your vet, then a behaviorist

What you see	Why it matters	Who to call first
Lunging and snarling on leash	May be fear or frustration and can escalate.	A qualified reward-based pro, and your vet

UNTIL YOU GET HELP

- **Keep everyone safe.** Use gates, closed doors, and leashes. Avoid the things that set your dog off.
- **Don't punish.** It can raise fear and remove warning signs.
- **Don't test your dog** to see if they'll do it again.
- **Don't try to change medication** or give human drugs. Talk to your vet.
- **Keep kids and visitors away** from a dog you're worried about.

11.2 If your dog bites someone

1. **Separate calmly.** Put your dog in a safe room or on a leash. Don't punish.
2. **Get medical care.** Clean the wound and have the person contact a doctor. Get medical help right away for serious bites.
3. **Share the facts.** Exchange contact details and your dog's vaccination information.
4. **Follow local rules.** Bite reporting and quarantine rules vary by location.
5. **Call your vet.** Ask for a health exam and a referral to a behavior professional.
6. **Write down what happened** while you remember it: where, when, who, and what came just before.

11.3 Who's who

Dog training is unregulated, as AVSAB-published guidance points out. In practice, almost anyone can use the title of trainer. Here's what the main titles mean.

Who	What they do	Where to look
Your veterinarian	Checks for medical causes. Can refer you, and can prescribe medication.	Your clinic
Board-certified veterinary behaviorist (DACVB)	A veterinarian with specialist training in behavior. Best for serious cases.	dacvb.org directory
Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist (CAAB)	A behavior scientist with advanced training. ASPCA names this credential for serious cases.	Ask your vet
Certified behavior consultant	A consultant certified by a group like IAABC. Works on behavior problems.	iaabc.org
Certified trainer (such as CPDT)	Teaches manners and skills. Ask about experience with fear.	ccpdt.org directory

AVSAB's guide also mentions Karen Pryor Academy, the Academy for Dog Trainers, Victoria Stilwell Academy, Pet Professional Guild, IAABC, and Fear Free as useful backgrounds. It adds that credentials alone don't guarantee quality, so look at how a trainer actually works.

11.4 Green flags and red flags

These are based on AVSAB's *How to Choose a Trainer* guide.

Green flags	Red flags
Rewards such as treats, toys, and praise	Prong or shock collars, leash jerks, rolling a dog on their back, water spray, rattle cans
Talks about communication, cues, and building a bond	Talks about boss, alpha, pack leader, or dominance
Describes "positive reinforcement" or "force free"	Describes "balanced training" or correcting behavior
Prevents the problem and teaches a replacement	Punishes or shuts down normal behavior
Upbeat voice and friendly body language	Harsh voice, yelling, stomping, or threats
Is open about methods and lets you watch	Won't let you watch, or takes your dog away for training and won't show how
Won't promise results	Guarantees a fix or a timeline

The last two rows are our own additions.

11.5 Questions to ask a trainer

- [ ] What exactly will you do when my dog gets it right?
- [ ] What exactly will you do when my dog gets it wrong?
- [ ] Do you ever use choke, prong, or shock collars? (Look for a clear no.)
- [ ] What education or certification do you have? Are you up to date?
- [ ] Can I watch a class or a session first?
- [ ] When would you refer me to a vet or a veterinary behaviorist?

AVSAB also tells owners to speak up. If you see stress in your dog, or don't feel heard, ask for other options or find a different trainer.

11.6 What to bring to the vet

- [ ] A short phone video of the behavior, if you can record it safely
- [ ] Your Bark Log and tracker pages, plus your question: would a behavior consult or referral help?
- [ ] When it started, and any changes in eating, sleep, or bathroom habits
- [ ] A list of what you've tried, including any collars or sprays
- [ ] Your dog's food, treats, and medicines

PART 4 · CHAPTER 12

Questions People Ask

Straight answers to the things you may be wondering.

12.1 About the method

Will this work for my breed?

AVSAB's guide says positive reinforcement has worked across dog breeds and training goals. Every dog still has their own needs and pace. A herding dog may need more brain work. A hound may need more sniff breaks. A flat-faced dog may tire faster and need gear chosen with your vet.

My dog is 8 years old. Is it too late?

No. Older dogs learn too, though long-standing habits usually take more repetition. Get a vet check first, because older dogs often have aches you can't see.

Isn't this just bribing my dog?

A bribe comes first, to talk someone into doing something. A payment comes after the job is done. We pay after the Pause. Over time you also shift to real-life pay, like sniffing and greeting.

Won't all these treats make my dog fat?

Not if you plan for it. Use tiny pieces, use part of the daily food, and stay near the 10% guideline from Section 3.4.

Can I say "No"?

You'll probably say it now and then. You're human. It just doesn't teach your dog what to do. A calm redirect, like a happy "This way!" or "Touch," gives your dog a way to get it right.

12.2 About training

How long will this take?

We don't know, and we'd be misleading you if we said we did. It depends on your dog, the habit, your setting, and your consistency. Look for small changes: shorter barking, faster recovery, one more loose step.

My dog won't eat outside. What now?

A dog who won't eat may be too worried or too excited. Move further away from whatever's going on. Try your yard or an empty parking lot. Try higher-value food. If your dog is scared outside, talk to your vet.

My partner won't follow the rules. Help!

Show them one small win, instead of a lecture. Give them one simple job, such as the Coming Home routine. Share the fridge page. Keep the gate up while you work on it.

Can I use a clicker?

Yes. A clicker can be more precise than your voice. Click, then pay, just as with "Yes!" Keep it simple and use whichever you'll actually use.

What about a dog walker or daycare?

Give them your rules page and ask what they do when dogs pull, bark, or jump. If they use collars or spray bottles, look elsewhere.

12.3 About gear and gadgets

A trainer told me my dog needs a prong collar. Is that true?

AVSAB's position is that aversive tools aren't necessary for training and shouldn't be used. If someone says your dog needs one, look for a reward-based professional and get a second opinion.

Are vibration collars okay?

Some deaf dogs are taught with vibration signals by reward-based trainers, using it as a cue that means "look at me for a treat." That's a specialized use. Don't use a vibrating collar to startle or stop your dog. Ask a qualified pro.

Should I use a head halter?

ASPCA mentions head halters for some barking dogs on walks. They need careful, gradual introduction, and many dogs dislike them at first. If you think one could help, work with a reward-based trainer so it's done gently.

What about calming products?

VCA mentions pheromone products for some dogs. Ask your vet before trying supplements, pheromones, or anything else. Don't give your dog any human medicine unless your vet says so.

TOOLS

Appendix: Printable Tools

Print these pages or copy them into a notebook.

A. The one-page cheat sheet

P
Prep the scene
Block the old habit.

A
Ask for a little
One small Pause.

U
Use your marker
"Yes!" right then.

S
Serve the payoff
Pay fast and small.

E
Extend slowly
One dial at a time.

Problem	Prep	The Pause	Quick moves
Pulling	Harness, quiet route, leash in the right hand	Slack leash	Stop. Wait. "Yes!" Pay at your leg. U-turn. "Go sniff!"
Barking	Block views, sound cover, food toy	Closed mouth	Pay before barks. Use name or Touch. Mat at the bell. Ignore demand barks only.
Jumping	Gate or leash, treats by the door, text your guests	Four paws down	Step back. Stay silent. Pay low. Scatter with "Find it!"

8 out of 10 right	5 to 7 out of 10	Fewer than 5 out of 10
Make it a bit harder	Stay where you are	Make it easier

STOP AND CALL YOUR VET OR A PRO

Biting or snapping. Growling or guarding. Strong fear. Panic when alone. Any sudden behavior change.

B. Family rules for the fridge

OUR DOG'S NAME: _____

1. Four paws on the floor before anyone says hello.

2. If the dog jumps, stand up, turn away, stay quiet. Say hello when paws are down.

3. A tight leash means we stop. A loose leash means we go.

4. No attention for demand barking. Check real needs first.

5. We pay for calm moments, every day.

6. Every "Yes!" gets a reward.

7. No yelling, no spraying, no hitting, no leash jerks.

Our words	What they mean
Yes!	That's it! A treat is coming.
Touch	Bring your nose to my hand.
Find it	Sniff the floor for treats.
Mat	Go to your mat and stay.
Free	You can get up now.
This way	We're turning. Follow me.
Go sniff	You've earned a sniff break.
Quiet	Thanks, I've got it. Stop barking and get paid.

C. Payoff Menu worksheet

Offer a few safe foods and toys. Note what your dog loves. Keep it updated, because tastes change.

Pay level	What works for my dog
Regular pay Home practice	
Good pay New skills, yard, driveway	
Jackpot pay Doorbell, guests, other dogs	
Real-life pay Sniffing, toys, doors, greetings	
Foods to avoid Allergies, vet advice	

My dog's daily calories, from my vet: _____ Treat budget (about 10%): _____

Our session times: _____ _____ _____

D. Bark Log

Day and time	What set it off?	How long?	What happened next?

Patterns I noticed:

E. 14-day tracker

Give each area a score from 0 to 3. **0** = no change, **1** = a little better, **2** = better most times, **3** = easy today.

Day	Walk	Quiet	Greet	Notes (place, trigger, what helped)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				

F. Day 7 and Day 14 reviews

Question	Day 7	Day 14
How many sessions did we do?		
What's easier now than when we started?		
What's still hard?		
Where is the old habit still getting paid?		
What will we change?		
Any red flags? (If yes, see Chapter 11.)		

G. Glossary

Word	Plain meaning
Aversive	Something your dog wants to avoid, like pain, fear, or force. Aversive tools include choke, prong, and shock collars.
Cue	A word or signal that tells your dog what to do. Trainers prefer this to "command."
Flooding	Forcing a dog to stay near something scary until they stop reacting. AVSAB advises against it.
Lure	Food that guides your dog into position.
Management	Setting up the home or walk so the old habit can't happen.
Marker	A sound, like "Yes!" or a click, that tells your dog exactly what earned the treat.
Pause	Our word for a small moment of calm that gets paid.
Payoff	Anything your dog wants: food, toys, sniffs, attention, movement.
Positive reinforcement	Adding something good after a behavior, so the behavior happens more.
Reactivity	Strong reactions like barking and lunging at triggers. Often linked with fear or frustration.
Release word	A word like "Free" that tells your dog they can get up.
Reward-based training	Teaching with rewards and taking rewards away, without force or fear.
Threshold	The point where your dog goes from noticing a trigger to reacting to it.
Trigger	Anything that sets off a behavior: a doorbell, a dog, a person.

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