



# Does your dog go into a **BARKING FRENZY** when the doorbell rings?



## Teaching Fido Manners at the Door

 By Mike Wombacher

**D**oes your dog bark like crazy, leap up on your guests or run out every time someone comes to your door? Join the club. Most dogs frustrate their owners relentlessly with such annoying displays.


Have you tried getting him to “sit-stay” when strangers come in, to no avail? Again, you are not alone. To deal with this problem simply and quickly I have devised something called “the zone defense.”

The “zone defense” involves defining a zone around the inside of the door that the dog is not allowed within once the owner touches the doorknob. All that is needed is a squirt bottle that allows you to shoot a jet stream filled either with water or a taste deterrent such as “Bitter Apple,” “Bitter Yuck” or a similar product.

First, place the bottle near the door and within easy reach. Next, have someone ring the doorbell. Naturally, Fido will charge the door, barking madly. That’s fine—part of his job. Of course, the dog will arrive at the door ahead of you. However, once you reach the door a couple of things should happen. Grab the squirt bottle, hiding it behind your back. Turn to the dog and command “out,” pointing away from the door. Of course, your dog will have no idea what you’re talking about. At which point you give him a quick squirt on the nose. Startled, the dog will usually back up. Be sure he retreats behind some line that you’ve defined as the boundary of the “zone.” Obvious boundaries, such as doorways can help define imaginary lines. With your dog behind that line, turn back to the door and have your accomplice ring

the doorbell again; when the dog charges, repeat the procedure. Very quickly the dog will stay outside the “zone” as you open the door. Toss a treat in his direction at this point.

Now there are two possibilities. If you are receiving a delivery, simply receive it, close the door and that’s that. Because your dog was out of the “zone” he wasn’t jumping up, intimidating a postal worker or squeezing out the door; no need to worry whether or not he was sitting, all you care about is that the dog is out of the “zone.” Alternatively, if your visitor is a guest, invite them in and close the door. Fido is still required to stay out of the “zone” and at least five or six feet away. Only once the door is closed and you invite him to say ‘hello,’ may Fido approach. Of course, if he jumps, he gets squirted, neatly eliminating jumping, as well as door crashing.

The beauty of this approach is its simplicity and effectiveness. No difficult training involved and you get the best of all worlds. Your dog may still alert you to the presence of strangers, but will quickly learn to back out of the zone and wait respectfully while you either receive your goods or invite your friend in. In the latter case this is followed, not only by an acceptable greeting but a total lack of disparaging looks from your friends. Give it a try. 

For more information:

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