

Stop Barking Dogs! Step-By-Step Action Plan And Anti-Bark Strategies To Avoid

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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Today we [continue the series](#) on barking dogs. But if you say, "Susan, my dog doesn't bark," trust me today there's going to be a lot of interesting things I'm going to share with you, including a complete protocol on how to use a [remote feeder](#). I'm going to share my step by step on tackling those barking dogs. And I'm also going to tell you about the time when Susan Garrett, yes, yours truly used a bark collar.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And yes, in fact, I did at one time use a bark collar on a dog. And I'm going to tell you what I learned from that. And we're going to start right off with that. It was 1997, [my dog Buzz](#) was about a year old, and he was verbally enthusiastic, let's call him. Meaning anytime he got excited, he screamed. He didn't bark, he screamed.

So, when I was training him in agility, and he would just sit in front of a jump and quiver. And then the moment I released him to do the jump, that's when the screaming would start. I had a small backyard back then. And I would train with a couple of jumps and a tunnel in the backyard.

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And of course, my neighbors would like, "What is going on? Is there somebody murdering a cat over there? Why is this animal so loud?" And so, somebody suggested, "Oh, you should use a bark collar. You can use one that works with electricity or one that works with a citronella spray. It's simple. It just gives a little puff, and the dog learns not to bark."

And so, rather than choosing the one that used electricity, I chose the one that used citronella. So, the mechanics of it was that there's a little box that sits under the dog's neck and when they barked, or footnote, when any dog barked, that dog would get shot with a spray of citronella. And so, leading up to that, I had done a lot of things to try to get my dog to not to bark when he's did agility.

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And funny thing, he rarely barked outside of agility. It was just when he got super excited to play a game. And so, I conditioned the collar, I conditioned him to, you know the word "shh," back then I used the word "quiet." And it came the day I was going to put this collar on, lower the jumps very low, make things very easy for him.

And the first time I released him, he barked, and he got the spray. He jumped sideways. Like "What was that? That was weird." Set him back up, did it again. He barked again, got the spray and he stopped barking. I was able to work that entire day and he didn't bark. But every time we started a session, he would bark.

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It took about two or three sessions before he said, "I don't care about this spray." And he went back to his entire screaming protocol of you know, showing joy. And that's all he was doing. Showing joy for something that he loves. Why, Susan, did you feel the need to punish the dog for that? I did it for the neighbors, but the truth is it was me and my training protocol that contributed to the dog's barking.



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Genetically though, he was a dog who showed joy when he was happy, when he was doing something that he loved. Now, I only used that citronella collar for that first week. I saw that it brought no value to my training, and I never used it again. So, three training sessions, that was it. But guess what happened?

Anytime I tried to clip a collar behind his ears, he started to shake. So, he wasn't as aroused, but he didn't necessarily associate the *spray sound with stop barking. But he did associate because I clipped on this collar anytime I was going to go do agility. Anytime I clipped a collar on, he would go straight into avoidance.

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Even a year later, when I started trialing him in agility, when at the end of the ring, I picked up his collar and leash and went to clip it back on, he ran away from me. And now that was an obvious fix. I went to a buckle up collar and a slip-on collar for agility.

But here's the other thing. Anytime we were in an environment, and he heard a *spray sound, so somebody had a deodorizer in a room that was making that noise.

And a lot of dog training facilities had them back then, *spray sound, he would bolt to the corner and shake. Three sessions, guys. And I didn't see any visible sign that it bothered him. But for the rest of his life, if he heard that sound, he had a meltdown.

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So, one of the questions in [episode number 239](#) was, "Susan, would you use a bark collar?" Absolutely not. I would not recommend you use a bark collar. I encourage everybody to work with the dog, to acknowledge that they are a living being that has emotions that we're trying to get them to fit into our world.

And so, we have to examine our expectations, examine the time that we have to put in to fix the problems that we have and know that at the end of the day, the dog's doing the best they can with the education we've given them in the environment that we've put them in.

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And so, what can you do? First of all, you need to be patient. We are trying to change a habit. If the dog is nine years old and they've been doing this for nine years, it's a long-established habit. Have you ever tried to create a new habit or even worse break an old one? So, quitting smoking, hardest thing I've ever done in my lifetime.

And for some of you, it might be going to the gym every day. For me, that's not a difficult thing because it's something that I've enjoyed doing my entire life. Not eating sweets. What is the habit that you've tried to break and how much success did you have doing it instantaneously? So, let's be patient with our dogs as we work through this protocol.

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And at the end of the day, it's about bringing joy to your dog's life. And I promise you, if you follow what I'm suggesting, you will be [bringing more joy](#) to your dog's life on your way to creating a more harmonious relationship with you. So, number one is, be patient. Number two is [daily exercise](#). Fresh air, getting the dog out, ideally a minimum of an hour a day, 90 minutes if you can. I recognize that's a big, big ask.



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But getting your dog out, letting them sniff stuff, letting them get fresh air, filling their lungs, and when I say an hour outside, I do not mean turned out in your backyard. I mean away from the location that they're used to. New and novel.

Because that's getting the dog exercise, that's engaging their brain in sniffing that will help exhaust the dog. A lot of the things I'm suggesting will minimize the dog's triggers because their life is so full in other areas. So, exercise would be the number two thing behind being patient.

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Number three would be engagement aka training. You should set up five dog training sessions a day. And I hear you now, "Susan, that is stupid. I'm not doing this." Five dog training sessions. You're just attached to little habits. [I've talked about this before](#). When you brush your teeth, you can train your dog 90 seconds. One little engagement. Waiting for your coffee to make, waiting for the waffles to come out of the waffle iron.

Whatever it is that you do in the morning as part of your routine, or instead of hitting the snooze button, aka the lose button, you're going to get out of bed and say, "That gives me 15 more minutes. I'm going to [play one game with my dog](#)."

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And that's how you're going to do it throughout the day. When you have more time, you might have a longer session. But I will train for literally 30 to 90 seconds, several times a day.

That's creating engagement. It's creating relationship. And those 90 seconds every day, if you can get in three or four of those plus one longer one, guess what, they all add up.

They all take you to somewhere better. Doing 90 seconds a day versus doing one hour a week, which one do you think is better? 90 seconds, four times a day, I promise you will bring you better result than one one-hour session. So, work that into your timetable.

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And remember what I spoke about in the last episode, podcast episode number 239, it's important that you become predictably unpredictable. So, yes, you can tie a quick little game to something that you do every morning. But ideally, it'd be great if you changed up when you did it.

When you take your dog for a walk, don't make it on the dot the same time. Vary it around your activities in the morning if you can, because we don't want to create more anxiety as the dog is expecting, "Oh, this is when I get my reward for that. This is when we go visit all of the sniff spots. This is when I get my reward for [hand touches](#). This is when I go to read the pee mail outside."

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No, predictably, unpredictable. Yes, you've got to do it like before you leave for work in the morning but mix that up both when you're feeding your dog, when you're playing games, and when you're taking that dog out for their walk.

Number four would be enrichment. Now, part of that enrichment is [letting them sniff on their walks](#). Now you're not going to let them sniff the whole way. You can stop and let them read the pee mail for a bit, and then you're going to move on. And hey, you can do some little dog training things as you're walking, or you can just enjoy nature with your dog and have a little walkabout.



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Enrichment for me is things like brain games, the [food puzzles](#). Enrichment can be the [puppy bombs](#) or stuffing food into a [Toppl](#). That's like borderline enrichment. Enrichment is where the dog ideally is using their paws, their nose, their eyes, using all of their senses to seek out reinforcement.

And journaling. Yes. I know I've asked you to journal before, but I'm going to keep [asking you to journal](#). Journal both the things that you want to stop. Now, your dog may be barking at a number of different things. Trust me, if you do this protocol, your dog is going to minimize the number of times they're going to be bark. And you might be down to just one key time when "I'd love it if I can really get rid of barking here." Or have the dog bark for a short burst and then be relaxed.

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So, you want to journal all the times that your dog will bark. What is the thing before the thing? [Podcast episode number 16](#). What is the trigger that creates the need for the dog to bark? Journal that. Journal [what reinforcement](#) the dog may be getting from you, from other people in the house, and from the environment. That is a biggie.

Now you're going to journal those little games that you played throughout the day. You can put your plan in there when you have more time. You can plan maybe on your lunch break at work. Wouldn't that be a great time to do some dog training planning? Or on a break if you get morning or afternoon breaks, that might be a great time.

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[Plan your training](#). What games are you going to play? That's in your training journal. And then every day you can look back and look at the progress. Look where your dog is getting better at these things. Next, change the environment.

If there are areas of the house that your dog has become accustomed to standing a post and barking, whether it be at the threshold of a door or it be a window with a couch, try to change the environment so that the dog does not have access to those areas while you are working on this protocol.

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So, it could be maybe rearranging your furniture, so your couch is no longer up against the window or putting an ex-pen or a barrier around the couch for a little while and so that the dog can break that habit. We're going to help create a new habit for the dog. So, take the environmental portion away will allow you to break habits so much easier, which is why there's rehab centers, guys.

Habits can be broken quicker when we're taking the creature out of their familiar environments or the triggers that create those bad habits. Or taking them out of the environment that support those bad habits we're trying to change.

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Next are the games you're playing. Now I know I already talked about training, but I want you to get very intentional. Search, [ItsYerChoice](#), [Crate Games](#), [Relaxation Protocol](#), train those four in any order you want. And then we're going to add Hot Zone and Bring Me. And yes, you can use 'speak' if you want to.

So, Search, ItsYerChoice, Crate Games, Relaxation Protocol. Those are going to be biggies for you. So that you're going to put a little bit of work into every one of those throughout the day in those five training sessions you do.



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Leave me a comment if you're managing to get more than five little mini training sessions in a day. And finally, we now know what the triggers are, the thing before the thing, we're going to work on counter conditioning those triggers. How are we going to do that? Well, I've got some great resources in our podcasts.

So, if you want to listen to them, but ideally jump over to YouTube and [check out the playlists](#) because there are playlists just about on every topic. ['How to be a master of dog training?'](#), I would start there. So, you really get to understand how counter conditioning, desensitization, habituation, generalization, how all of that works.

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What we want to do is right now there's a trigger that your dog hears, smells, or sees something, and he locates and alerts. What we want to do is when he hears, smells, or sees something, he might look, but instead of alerting, he reorients to you or to a new environment.

For example, we're going to use the example of greetings at the front door. You've taught the dog what their "search" cue means. It means you can now look for food on the floor. We've taught our dogs, ItsYerChoice, which means you don't dive for food on the floor unless I give you the cue. Now we've also taught Crate Games and Relaxation. You continue to build those up.

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Guys, my puppy is 16 weeks old. He already will do a Relaxation Protocol, allowing me to Dremel his nails. So, I got him when he was about 11 weeks old. I was away for a week. So, it's been like four weeks to get to a point where he is completely relaxed, so relaxed that when I was at the veterinarian last week getting his booster shot, he immediately, I think because of the height of the table, just went to his Relaxation Protocol.

The veterinarian did her exam, gave him his vaccination, everything, and he just laid there chilling. So, it's so important to create that habit of just being calm. And this was a pretty new environment being at a vet clinic, but he immediately chose to be calm.

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So, those are critical. Build those into your daily practice. Now let's talk about the doorbell. And for the doorbell, I recommend you use a remote feeder. So, this is what it's going to look like. You've got a dog who loves the Hot Zone. And so, they will go to the Hot Zone, whatever you call it.

Now, Hot Zone should be a raised dog bed. So, something that's off the ground. Or at the very minimum, it has to have some sort of a lip on it that they are jumping into. That creates the best barrier. Remember, we want clarity. If you have like a towel on the ground or a mat on the ground, there's no clarity because I promise you the paws are going to be off the mat.

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And when the paws are off the mat, soon the elbows are off the mat, and before you know it, you have a dog like my girl Feature. By the time she was 14, she would keep one tippy toe in the Hot Zone. So, barriers, much, much better to [help create clarity](#) of what we want.

We've got a dog now loves a Hot Zone. You've got a cue. Mine is "Hop it up." And the dog will leave from anywhere and go into their Hot Zone. The next thing you're going to do is you're going to take a sound that's maybe if you have a doorbell, you're going to use a knock.



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And put it on your phone either, in your videos where you can access it really easy. You're going to play that and then say, "Hop it up." Very, very close to the bed now.

So now that becomes a new cue. The 'knock' becomes 'run to the bed'. Now I want you to use something that isn't the doorbell because we want to first condition the dog to a different sound means 'go to the Hot Zone.'

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Now we're going to get a new sound. You're just going to record your doorbell and you're going to have your dog on leash for this one, ideally on a harness because he may go lunging for the door. And you're going to play the sound, say, "hop it up."

Remember we need a learning gap in there. So, the sound, pause, hop it up. You're going to keep at this until from a very short distance away, like one stride away, the dog hears the sound, they're going to jump into the Hot Zone.

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Now the Hot Zone, you should have one very, very close to the front door. Now we have a dog that will jump in their Hot Zone at the sound. Now, they're probably not going to do it when somebody comes to the door actually. But in the meantime, what you can do is you can change how people get into your house.

So, put a sign and say, 'Doorbell broken, please knock.' And if you already have people knocking on the door, maybe put a door knocker so it changes the sound. You want to ideally change that environmental trigger for the dog while you're reconditioning what they should be doing somebody comes to the door.

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So, now we have a dog who will go in on the doorbell alone. Here's where your remote feeder comes in. You're going to put the remote feeder so that the dog can access the reinforcement from the Hot Zone. So, either beside it or above it where the cookies will drop in.

You are going to know what's high value, moderate value, and low value reinforcement for your dog, and you're going to start only with high value.

So, you're going to make that sound, they're going to run to the Hot Zone, and you're going to hit the remote for the feeder. They're going to get their yummy high value rewards.

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Then you're going to have a friend come over and just ring the bell. And the dog has the freedom to go to the door. If there is windows they can look through at the door and see somebody there, you need to block that access out so that if he runs to the door, nothing happens, he goes to the Hot Zone, he gets reinforcement.

And you're going to do that, again nobody's coming through the door. You're going to do that until he will no longer leave. The doorbell means 'go in your Hot Zone.' Doorbell, go in your Hot Zone.

Now what you're going to do is you are going to progress up to the point where you know they're coming and they're going to come in.



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So, the person rings the bell, you deliver the reinforcement, they come in the house, you continue to deliver reinforcement via the remote. That high value reinforcement, if the dog leaves a high value reinforcement to get to the person, the person just turns their back and faces the wall and says nothing.

Does not give that dog any reinforcement. The dog will go back to the bed and again, you just continue to reinforce, right? Now, it's "Susan, I'm going to have to burn through all these high value reinforcements." It's okay, because now we have one good repetition, we're going to mix in some moderate value in with the high.

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Not as much high, we're getting to a place where there's more moderate. And we're going to do the same thing. When we get to a place where we put low value reinforcement in the remote feeder, I'm not saying low like 'my dog won't eat it.' I'm like, 'well, if there's nothing else, he'll eat this.' Because what's going to happen, we're going to hit the remote, reinforce a dog, but you're going to be throwing [high value reinforcement](#).

This is a step to fading the remote feeder. I just want bowls of food around. And at first it could be high but then you know, it's just moderate for my dogs now. Moderate and some low mixed in there. Doorbell rings, you can just throw a handful of cookies in the Hot Zone.

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When will this not work? It won't work if you have [multiple dogs](#), and you haven't trained them individually. It also won't work if you have multiple dogs and one of them is a [resource guarder](#) that you haven't dealt with that anxiety first. So, deal with one dog at a time. We have Hot Zones in different locations.

Sometimes the dogs go to the same location and eat out of the same remote feeder if we're at that stage. No big deal because we don't have dogs that will resource guard against another dog. So, there's your complete protocol on how to use and fade your remote feeder and how to work through one trigger to barking.

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That may not be your dog's trigger but using that protocol and the one that I mentioned before, and the one I mentioned in episode number 239, I know you'll be able to come up with a way to eliminate at the very least minimize the amount and the intensity of your dog's barking.

Jump over to YouTube, leave me a comment, let me know if this makes sense to you. And while you're there, go ahead hit the like button and subscribe if you're not a subscriber. That like button is reinforcement to my team for all their hard work they do making those videos engaging for you. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

Get Crate Games Online:

<https://get.crategames.com/>

Learn To Play ItsYerChoice:

<https://recallers.com/iycsummit-join/>





Episode: #240

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Resources:

[Podcast Episode 238: Barking Dogs! Understanding Canine Vocalization To Prevent Nuisance Barking](#)
[Pet Geek Remote Feeder](#)

[Podcast Episode 224: Unleashing Fluency In Dog Training: Cracking The Canine Communication Code](#)

[Podcast Episode 239: Barking Dogs! How To Help Your Dog Be Quiet And Stop Barking](#)

[Podcast Episode 176: Why Your Dog's Emotions Are A Critical Element Of Dog Training](#)

[YouTube Video: 15 Ways To Exercise Your Dog](#)

[Podcast Episode 190: Using Daily Quickies To Fast Track Your Dog Training And Grow Your Dog's Skills](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Dog Training Games With Susan Garrett](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Target Training for Dogs with Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 74: Yes, Susan Garrett's Dogs Sniff On Walks](#)

[Nina Ottosson Food Puzzles](#)

[DIY Puppy Bombs](#)

[Toppl Dog Toy](#)

[Podcast Episode 71: Pro Dog Trainer's Secret to Help Your Naughty Dog](#)

[Podcast Episode 16: The Thing Before Your Dog's Thing](#)

[Podcast Episode 205: The Hidden World Of Reinforcement For Dogs And Why You Need To Know](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Planning Your Dog Training With Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 191: Get Your Dog To Calm Down With This Common Sense Protocol For Relaxation](#)

[DogsThat YouTube Channel Playlists](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Mastery of Positive Reinforcement Based Dog Training with Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 21: The 5 Critical Dog Training Layers for Confidence with Anything](#)

[Podcast Episode 59: Why Your Treats Aren't Working for Your Dog](#)

[Podcast Episode 181: Training Multiple Dogs To Wait Turns And Relax](#)

[Podcast Episode 66: Resource Guarding: Dog vs Dog Aggression](#)



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About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with every dog she has ever owned over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago. Susan has helped hundreds of thousands of people enjoy a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.



A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.

Susan is now helping many thousands of dog owners in 82 countries have the best relationship possible with their dogs. The real joy for her comes from bringing confidence to dogs and their owner through playful interactions and relationship building games that are grounded firmly in the science of how animals learn.



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