

Click for Care™....

An Easy Steps Clicker Series by Karen Pryor

Make your Shelter a Bark-Free Zone

Constant barking is stressful for owners, patients, and staff. A small shift in routine management can reduce the noise level to zero.

Preparation

- Hang a small envelope of kibble or treats and a clicker outside each enclosure. Or have kennel employees wear clickers on their wrists or belts.
- Ask anyone who is frequently in the kennel area to use the following clicker procedures:

Steps

1. If a dog is barking, approach the dog, wait until the barking stops even for a split second, click, treat, and move on. Or...
2. If a dog is barking persistently, don't look at it; instead, click and treat its quiet neighbors, just once, and move on.
3. If a barking dog stops when he sees you coming, click and toss treat. Wait a few beats, watching the dog. Click and treat, again.
4. Mark kennels of persistent barkers with a colored tag or ribbon; ask staff to click and treat any periods of quiet from those dogs.
5. Click persistent barkers for any of the following behaviors: looking away, lying down, backing away from gate.
6. Be patient. Habitual barkers may get worse, temporarily, before they give in and offer silence as the new way to get attention.
7. In traditionally noisy moments, such as mealtime, click quiet dogs before feeding. Feed barkers last, and only after a click.

Ask staff to click occasionally for quiet on an irregular basis; unpredictable clicks and treats will maintain behavior strongly.

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