**Doorbell barkers**

Dear Cesar,

I have three dogs that bark like crazy whenever the doorbell rings, and they have been a challenge. To correct them, we have been ringing the doorbell, then flipping them over and growling in their faces to let them know it is not the way they should act. Is there anything else I can do to stop them from barking at the doorbell?

**Cesar's Answer:**

First of all, this technique of flipping your dogs over is not appropriate for the type of training you’re trying to do. You want to teach your dogs to not attach any special significance to the doorbell, but by using a technique designed only to block a dog that is being aggressive, you are actually teaching them to become more anxious, or possibly defensively aggressive, when they hear the doorbell.

Understand it from your dog’s point of view – what they are learning is, “Doorbell means my humans will attack me,” and that is not the idea you want them to have.

Using the sound of the doorbell is the right thing, but you want to associate it with something calm and pleasant for your dog. If your dogs are already trained to sit calmly before receiving treats from you, you’re halfway there.

What you need to do is get them to sit calmly for a treat first, then ring the doorbell. If they do not react to it, they get the treat. If they do react, redirect them with the smell of the treat (but don’t give it to them yet), get them to sit calmly and wait, then repeat the process.

In this way, you will teach them that “doorbell = treat,” but only if they sit calmly. You’ll also want everyone in the house to have treats on them at first, so that when the doorbell rings at random they can reward the dogs that comply right away.

Eventually, you’ll be able to do away with the treats. Finally, you said you have three dogs; focus on the most dominant one in the training; this will help you in training all three at once.