



# HOW TO HAVE YOURSELF A... CALM CHRISTMAS

## MORNING

- Calm sniff walk
- Breakfast with added enrichment
- 10 minutes of pattern game
- 10-minute nap in sanctuary space

## VISITOR ARRIVAL

- Scatter feed
- Dog stays behind gate
- Guests get in and sit down
- Dog enters once calm
- Practice settle
- Chew given

## DINNER PREP

- Dog in decompression zone with something long-lasting
- No open access to kitchen

## DURING DINNER

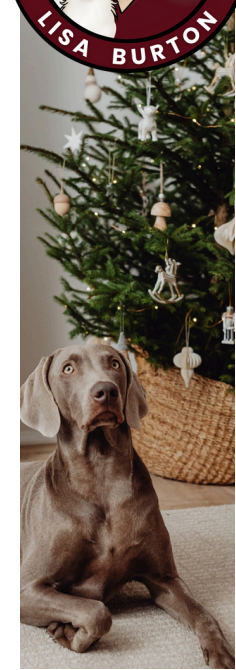
- Closed gate
- A stuffed Kong or licki mat

## AFTER DINNER

- Quiet walk
- Calm training game (settle, middle, sit and look)
- Chew or nap

## EVENING

- Low lights
- No rough play
- Sanctuary space available



## XMAS CHALLENGE #1: BARKING AT VISITORS

### Most visitor barking is either:

- Alert barking (normal)
- Uncertainty
- Excitement
- Frustration
- Or a dog who feels responsible for "security"

### Fix it With:

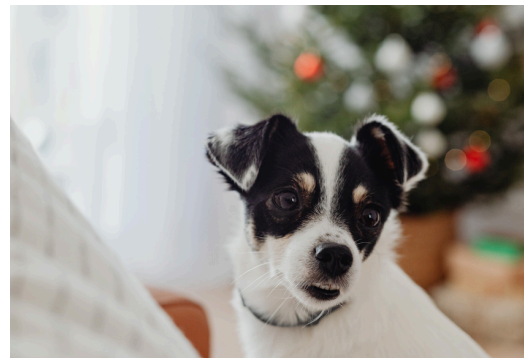
- ✓ Visitor Ritual
- ✓ Baby gate blocking the doorway
- ✓ Treat scatter **before** guests enter
- ✓ Pattern game after the first bark
- ✓ 'Thank you' protocol - 'check' the alert, acknowledge their communication and confirm all is well. Dogs love clarity.

## XMAS CHALLENGE #2: OVER-EXCITABLE DOGS WHO CAN'T SETTLE

These dogs are not being naughty, their nervous system is just stuck in the 'on' position!

### Your Tools Include:

- Sanctuary space
- Chews
- Sniffing
- Pattern games
- 'Settle reflex' training
- Calm-prep ritual before guests
- Lower-intensity exercise
- Pre-Christmas boundary setting (e.g., no rough play from kids)





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## XMAS CHALLENGE #3: JUMPING UP ON GUESTS

This is simply a dog who hasn't learned what to replace jumping with.

### Teach a Replacement:

- Middle
- Hand target
- Sit-and-look
- Go to bed
- Grab-a-toy greeting

Practise for the next two weeks with literally any human you encounter.

Consistency is key.

## XMAS CHALLENGE #4: BARKING AT VISITORS

Christmas is food heaven... which means temptation heaven.

### Your Tools:

#### Physical Management:

- Baby gates
- Dogs out of kitchen during cooking
- No food left unattended

#### Reinforcement Strategies:

- ✓ Reward your dog for choosing not to approach the counter
- ✓ Use a mat behaviour in the kitchen
- ✓ Give a chew during meal prep

## XMAS CHALLENGE #5: DOGS WHO STRUGGLE WITH OVERNIGHT GUESTS

Some dogs get stressed by people moving around the house at night.

### Fix it With:

- A 'night routine' two weeks ahead: Lights down → chew → same bedtime each night
- White noise near the dog
- Visitor introduction the day they arrive
- Sanctuary space overnight
- Baby gate if needed

Predictability = calm.

