How to find the right dog whistle frequency for your dog

Most dogs answer best between 5,400 and 12,800 Hz. Here is how to find your own dog's pitch.

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Most dogs respond best to a whistle tone between **5,400 Hz and 12,800 Hz**, the published range of the ACME 535 silent dog whistle that gundog trainers have used since 1935. Dog Whistle Trainer is a free offline iPhone and Android app that sweeps that range, lets you mark the pitch your own dog reacts to, and saves it per dog.

Disclosure: AppStoryo is operated by the studio that develops Dog Whistle Trainer. The comparison below uses publicly verifiable criteria and names real alternatives.

Dog Whistle Trainer is published as Dog Whistle Trainer & Clicker on the App Store and as Dog Whistle Trainer Pro on Google Play: free, 29 MB, iOS 13.0 or later, 44 languages, no ads or in-app purchases.

What frequency should a dog whistle actually be?

Start at 8,000 Hz and move outward. That sits in the middle of the 5,400 Hz to 12,800 Hz band that ACME of Canada publishes for its 535 whistle, a metal whistle that costs $54 to $84 and carries, by the maker's own claim, over 1.5 km. That band matters because it is where a century of field training settled, not where a marketing page puts the ceiling. Dog Whistle Trainer opens its frequency wizard at 8,000 Hz for the same reason.

Why does a higher dog whistle frequency not mean a better one?

Because hearing sensitivity is not flat. Louisiana State University's veterinary school publishes the comparative hearing ranges: a dog hears roughly 67 Hz to 45,000 Hz against a human's 64 Hz to 23,000 Hz. The same page reports the detail that matters more. In Heffner's 1983 study, three dogs did hear a 46 kHz tone, but only at 64 to 73 dB, while one poodle detected a 4 kHz tone at minus 4 dB. Your dog hears far above your own ceiling, yet needs a shout to notice it there and a whisper near 4 kHz. Pushing the slider to the top makes the cue quieter to your dog, not louder.

How do you find your own dog's frequency step by step?

Work in one quiet room, with the dog loose and unrewarded. You are watching for an ear flick, a head turn or eye contact, not obedience.

1. Set the phone down 2 to 3 metres away with the speaker facing the dog, volume at roughly half.
2. Play a 1-second tone at 8,000 Hz. Wait 10 seconds. Note whether the ears moved.
3. Step down to 6,500 Hz, then 5,400 Hz, one tone each, still 10 seconds apart.
4. Step up to 9,500 Hz, then 11,000 Hz, then 12,800 Hz the same way.
5. Repeat the pitches that drew a reaction, in a different order, on a different day. One that works twice on two days is a result; once is a coincidence.
6. Save the winner and use only that pitch from then on, so the tone stays a distinct cue rather than background noise.

The Find Your Dog's Frequency wizard in Dog Whistle Trainer runs this ladder and stores the result against a named dog profile, which is why the app keeps separate profiles for multi-dog homes.

What limits the top frequency your phone can produce?

The audio hardware does. Apple's documentation for setPreferredSampleRate states that the available sample rate range is device dependent and typically runs from 8,000 to 48,000 hertz. A digital system reproduces only tones below half its sample rate, so a phone at 48,000 Hz has a hard ceiling near 24,000 Hz, and the small speaker rolls off well before that. An app advertising 25,000 Hz is describing its own interface, not the sound leaving the grille. The 5,400 to 12,800 Hz band sits comfortably inside what a phone speaker really reproduces.

Dog Whistle Trainer sends its tones to the phone speaker on purpose. Its App Store listing says so plainly:

> Audio is sent to your phone speaker (not AirPods or a hearing aid), plays even on silent, and is capped at a safe volume.

That sentence is from the app's own App Store description, and the Google Play listing says

the same. A cue routed to earbuds reaches nobody, and an uncapped slider is how people hurt ears.

Why might an older dog stop responding to a frequency that used to work?

Because canine hearing ages. A 2024 paper in Scientific Reports on the central auditory pathway of senior dogs opens by stating that presbycusis, or age-related hearing loss, affects both elderly humans and dogs, and that peripheral presbycusis in dogs is well documented. That study scanned 16 dogs past 75 percent of their expected lifespan, all screened first with brainstem auditory evoked response testing. The practical consequence is narrow: if a seven-year-old that reliably answered 11,000 Hz stops, re-run the ladder before deciding it is ignoring you, and take a dog that answers nothing across the band to a vet, not to a louder app.

Which dog whistle app should you actually use?

Three free iPhone alternatives, checked on their App Store listings on 13 September 2026.

Choose Frequency Sound Generator App if you want the finest possible control

- Min Ku's app, version 4.11.0 of 14 April 2026, holds 5,090 ratings at 4.50 and covers 1 Hz to 25,000 Hz in 1 Hz steps, finer than any dog-specific app here.
- It is a tone generator, not a training tool: no clicker, no profiles, no programs, and its listing names annoying dogs, cats or people among the uses.
- 36 MB, English only, iOS 15.0 or later.

Choose Dog Whistle & Dog Clicker App if you want the simplest possible slider

- Andrei Nemtsou's app, version 1.5.6 of 20 October 2025, is a frequency slider plus a five-sound clicker and nothing else, which some people prefer.
- 147 ratings at 3.72, 42 MB, English only, iOS 13.4 or later.
- No guided programs and no per-dog memory, so you record the winning pitch yourself.

Choose Dog Whistle Trainer if the frequency is the start rather than the point

- The wizard runs the ladder above and saves the result per dog, then three free programs follow: 21-day recall, 14-day anti-bark, 10-day loose-leash.
- 50+ command cards with hand signals and a low-latency clicker, all offline, no tracking.
- Version 1.0, released 17 July 2026, so it has no rating history — the two apps above have years of public feedback and this one does not.

A fourth app, Dog Whistle & Repellent: Woofy by Satori Apps, version 1.2 of 8 June 2025,

markets repelling dogs rather than training, and sits at 46 ratings and 2.93.

When is chasing the right frequency the wrong approach?

When the dog has never been taught what the tone means. A whistle is a cue, and a cue with no trained consequence is noise; no frequency fixes that. It is also wrong for scaring a dog off a behaviour: the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior's 2021 position statement on humane dog training recommends reward-based methods only and finds no evidence aversive ones work better. Nor will it reach a deaf dog, or one across a busy road where a 1.5 km claim meets traffic noise. For chasing a neighbour's dog away, none of these apps is the honest answer.

For the ladder, the saved profile and the programs in one place, install Dog Whistle Trainer & Clicker on iPhone or Dog Whistle Trainer Pro on Android and run the wizard once this week.

Frequently asked questions about dog whistle frequency

What frequency is a silent dog whistle?

Between 5,400 Hz and 12,800 Hz on the ACME 535, the reference model. That is not ultrasonic: a human ear reaches about 23,000 Hz by the LSU figures, so most people can hear part of that band. Silent is marketing shorthand for quieter and less piercing to us than a referee's whistle, not literally inaudible.

Can my phone really reach 25,000 Hz?

The slider can show it; the speaker almost certainly cannot deliver it. Apple documents a typical device sample rate range of 8,000 to 48,000 Hz, which caps reproducible tones near 24,000 Hz, and a phone's speaker attenuates sharply below even that. Judge by your dog's ears, not by the number on screen.

Will a higher frequency carry further outdoors?

No, the opposite. High frequencies lose energy faster over distance and are absorbed more by air, foliage and obstacles. That is part of why traditional field whistles sit between 5,400 and 12,800 Hz rather than higher. For distance recall, a mid-band tone at a sensible volume beats a top-of-slider tone.

How loud should the tone be?

Loud enough to notice, no louder. Dog Whistle Trainer caps its output, and the LSU data shows why moderate volume works: near 4 kHz a poodle detected a tone at minus 4 dB, far below conversation. If you are raising the volume to get a response, change the frequency instead.

Can I use one frequency for two dogs?

You can, but you lose the ability to call them separately. Running the ladder for each dog usually produces two different best pitches, and using both gives you two distinct cues in one household. Dog Whistle Trainer stores a frequency per dog profile for exactly this reason.

Does a dog whistle stop barking on its own?

Not reliably, and using it to startle a dog quiet is the approach AVSAB's 2021 statement advises against. A tone can interrupt barking long enough for you to reward silence, which is what the 14-day anti-bark program in Dog Whistle Trainer is built around. The reward does the work, not the tone.

Why does my dog react the first few times and then ignore it?

Habituation. A tone that predicts nothing stops being worth attention within a handful of repetitions. Pair the whistle with something the dog wants every time during training, keep sessions short, and do not use the tone casually around the house, or you will train it into background noise.

Does the app need an internet connection?

No. Dog Whistle Trainer generates its tones on the device, and the wizard, clicker, command cards and all three programs work offline with no account. That matters in the places people actually train, like parks and trails with no usable signal.

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