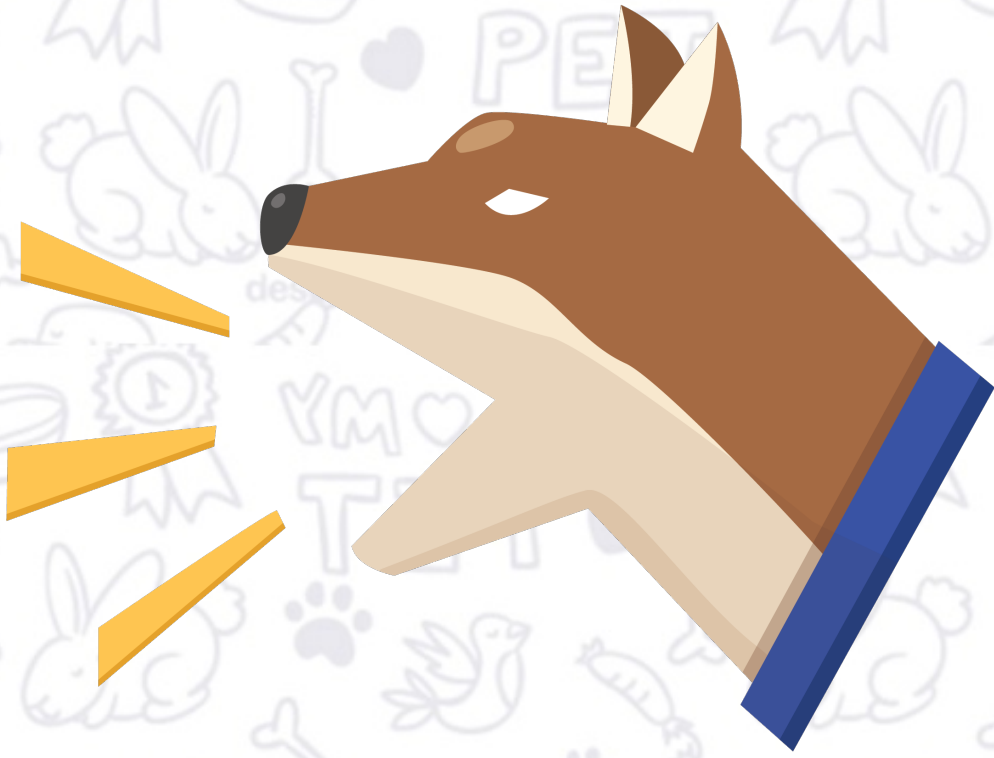


# **How To Stop Dog Barking**

## **It's Easy If You Do It Smart.**



Gerald Pilcher

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# Methods to Stop Your Dog's Excessive Barking

## INTRODUCTION

It's completely natural for dogs to bark, and it's one of their most essential forms of communication after energy and body language. Dogs will bark as a warning, to guard their pack and territory. They'll also bark to express excitement.

Those forms of barking are hardly ever a nuisance and don't last for very long. That's the reason why nuisance barking generally has the same cause and the same solution. When a dog barks too much, it's almost always telling you that he's bored and is searching for stimulation or a challenge.

Unavoidably, excessive barking signifies there's a problem with the human, and not the dog; there's something not balanced in the pack, so the dog's needs are not being satisfied. The barking is the sole method the dog has to inform you something is wrong.

This eBook will try to help you, dog owners, to figure out why your dog is barking excessively and what you can do to handle the situation.



# Understanding Why Your Dog Barks

## CHAPTER ONE

Barking is among the many forms of vocal communication for canines. People are often pleased that their dog barks, because it warns them to the approach of people to their home or it tells them there's something that the dog needs or wants. However, sometimes a dog's barking can be excessive. Because barking acts a number of functions, you have to identify its cause and your dog's inspiration for barking before you can treat a barking issue.

Each kind of barking serves a unique function for a dog, and if he's repeatedly rewarded for his barking- in short, if it gets him what he wants -he can figure out how to use barking to his benefit. For instance, dogs who successfully bark for attention often pursue to bark for other things, like food, play and walks. Because of this, it's important to train your dog be quiet on cue to help you stop his attention-related barking and teach him to complete another behaviour instead -like sit or down -to obtain what he wants.

Many owners can determine why their dog is barking just by hearing the particular bark. For example, a dog's bark sounds different when he wishes to play compared to when he wants to come in from the yard. If you need to reduce your dog's barking it's essential to determine why he's barking. It may need some time to teach your pooch to bark less.

Regrettably, it's just not realistic to count on a quick fix or to expect that your dog will stop barking altogether. Your goal will be to decrease, instead of eliminate, the amount of barking. Keep in mind some dogs are more prone to barking than others. Additionally, some dog breeds are called "barkers," and it can be trickier to reduce barking in individuals of these breeds.

### **Why Dogs Bark**

#### **Territorial Barking**

Dogs can bark exceedingly as a result of people, dogs or other animals within or getting close to their territories. Your dog's territory consists of the area surrounding his home and, eventually, anywhere he has explored or associates passionately with you: your vehicle, the road you take during walks and other places where he spends considerable time.

#### **Alarm Barking**

If your dog barks at any and every noise and sight no matter the context, he's most likely alarm barking. Dogs engaged in alarm barking normally have more rigid body language than dogs barking to greet, plus they often move or pounce forward an inch or two with every bark. Alarm barking differs from territorial barking in that a dog might alarm bark at sights or sounds in virtually any place at all, not merely when he's guarding familiar areas.

### **Attention-Seeking Barking**

Some dogs bark at people or other pets to get attention or rewards, such as food, toys or play.

### **Greeting Barking**

Your pooch might be barking in greeting if he barks when he sees people or other dogs and his body is relaxed, he's enthusiastic and his tail is wagging. Dogs who bark when greeting people or other animals could also whine.

### **Compulsive Barking**

Some dogs bark exceedingly in a repetitive way, like a broken record. These dogs often move over and over again too. For instance, a dog that is compulsively barking might run forward and backward along the fence in his yard or pace in his home.

### **Socially Facilitated Barking**

Some dogs bark too much only once they hear other dogs barking. This sort of barking happens in the social context of hearing other dogs, even at a distance -such as dogs in the neighbourhood.

### **Frustration-Induced Barking**

Some dogs bark overly only when they're put into an aggravating situation, like when they can't access play pals or when they're confined or tied up so that their action is limited.

### **Other Issues That Induce Barking**

#### **Illness or Injury**

Dogs sometimes bark as a result of pain or an agonizing condition. Before trying to resolve your dog's barking problem, please have your pet examined by a vet to eliminate medical causes.

#### **Separation-Anxiety Barking**

Excessive barking as a result of separation anxiety occurs only when a dog's caretaker is gone or when the dog is left alone. You'll typically see a minimum of one other separation anxiety symptom as well, such as pacing, destruction, elimination, depression or other signs of distress.

### **How to Handle Your Dog's Excessive Barking**

The first task toward reducing your dog's barking is to figure out the kind of bark your dog is expressing. The following questions can guide you to precisely choose which type of barking your dog is doing to help you best address your dog's problem.

When and where does the barking happen?

Who or what is the focus of the barking?

What triggers (people, object, situation) the barking?

Why is your dog barking?

## **If It's Territorial Barking or Alarm Barking**

Territorial behaviour is frequently stimulated by both fear and anticipation of a perceived risk or threat. Because guarding territory is undoubtedly a high priority to them, many canines are highly motivated to bark once they detect the approach of strangers or animals near familiar places, such as their homes and yards.

This top level of motivation implies that when barking territorially, your dog might disregard uncomfortable or punishing responses from you, like scolding or yelling. Even if the barking itself is reduced by punishment, your dog's motivation to protect his territory will remain powerful, and he might make an effort to control his territory differently, like biting unexpectedly.

Canines participate in territorial barking to alert others to the presence of unknown individuals or to frighten away intruders or both. A dog might bark when he sees or hears people coming over to the door, the mail carrier delivering the mail and the maintenance person examining the gas meter. He might also respond to the sights and sounds of people and dogs passing by your house.

Some dogs get particularly riled up when they're in the car and see people or dogs go by. You need to be able to judge from your dog's body posture and actions whether he's barking to say "Welcome, come on in!" or "Go away. You're not welcome here!"

To treat territorial barking, your dog's motivation must be reduced as well as his chances to defend his territory. To handle your dog's behaviour, you'll need to block his capacity to see people and animals. Detachable plastic film or spray-based glass coatings can assist to obscure your dog's view of areas that he notices and guards from within your house.

Use secure, opaque fencing to encompass outside areas your pet can access. Don't allow your dog to greet folks at the front door, at your front yard gate or at your property boundary line. Rather, train him to go to another location, similar to a crate or a mat, and stay quiet until he's invited to greet properly.

Alarm barking is quite much like territorial barking in that it's triggered by sights and sounds. Nonetheless, dogs that alarm bark might do so as a result of things that surprise or upset them when they're not on familiar turf. For instance, a dog who barks territorially in response to the sight of unknown people drawing near will usually only do so when in his own home, yard or car. By comparison, a pooch who repeatedly alarm barks might vocalize when he sees or hears unknown people drawing near elsewhere, too.

## **"Quiet" Training**

If your dog carries on alarm bark or bark territorially, in spite of your efforts to bar his exposure to sights and sounds that might set off his barking, try the following strategies:

Train your dog that when someone comes to the door or passes by your premises, he's allowed to bark until you say "Quiet." Let your dog bark three times. Then say "Quiet."

Avoid yelling. Just say the command clearly and with ease. Then go to your pet, gently hold his muzzle closed with your hand and repeat "Quiet." Release your dog's muzzle, step away, and call him away from the door or window. Then ask him to sit and present him a treat.

If he sits beside you and stays quiet, continue to keep giving him frequent goodies for an additional couple of minutes, until whatever triggered his barking has vanished. If your dog resumes barking instantly, repeat the above mentioned sequence. Do the same outdoors if he barks at passers by when he's in the yard.

If you like not to hold your dog's muzzle or if doing so has a tendency to frighten your dog or make him struggle, you can seek a different method. When your dog barks, approach him, smoothly say "Quiet," and then prompt his silence by giving him a steady flow of tiny, pea-sized treats. After enough practice of this sequence, over a couple of days or more of coaching, your dog will begin to determine what "Quiet" signifies.

You'll know that he's catching on if he regularly stops barking when he hears you say "Quiet." At this time, you can gradually prolong the time between the cue, "Quiet," and your dog's treat. Over several repetitions, progressively increase the time.

If the "Quiet" method is unproductive after 10 to 20 tries, then let your dog to bark 3 to 4 times, calmly say "Quiet," and then right away produce a startling noise by shaking a set of keys or an empty soda can stuffed with pennies. If your dog is successfully startled by the sound, he'll stop barking.

The moment he does, call him away from the door or window, ask him to sit, and present him a treat. If he stays beside you and stays quiet, carry on and give him regular treats for the next few minutes until whatever brought about his barking is gone. If he continues barking instantly, repeat the sequence.

If this process doesn't work after 10 to 20 attempts, seek professional help.

If your dog barks at people or other dogs during walks, draw attention away him with special treats, like chicken, cheese or hot dogs, before he starts to bark. Show your dog the doggie snacks by holding them in front of his nose, and encourage him to nibble at them while he's walking past a person or dog who'd normally trigger him to bark. Some dogs do best if you ask them to sit as people or other dogs pass. Other canines would rather move. Make sure you compliment and reward your dog with treats whenever he decides not to bark.

If your dog usually barks territorially in your vehicle, teach him to ride in a crate while in the car. Riding in a crate will limit your dog's view and decrease his motivation to bark. If crating your dog in your car isn't achievable, try having your dog wear a head halter inside the car instead.



# Training Your Dog to Reduce Barking

## CHAPTER TWO

To reduce your dog's excessive barking, it helps to teach your dog a definite set of behaviours to do when visitors come into your home so that he has fewer chances to alarm bark. Additionally, when your dog performs his new behaviours and receives rewards, he'll learn that people coming into your home is a good thing.

Prior to training your dog to go to a spot and stay there when a door opens, you have to educate him how to "sit" or "lie down" and then how to "stay." After your pooch has learned these skills, your training to "spot" may begin.

Look for a specific place in your home where you'd like your pet to go when visitors come to the door. If possible, pick a spot that's at least eight feet away from the front door but still within your sight. It might be an area at the top of a set of stairs, inside the doorway of another room, your dog's crate, or a rug positioned at the far corner of an entryway.

State "Go to your spot," let him see his treat, and then throw the treat onto the spot where you'd like him to go and stay. Do this sequence 10 to 20 times. By the tenth time, pretend-throw the treat to make your dog begin to move toward the spot on his own. As soon as he's standing on his spot, throw him the treat. As he catches on, you can stop making the fake throwing action with your arm and just give him the command, "Go to your spot." Then wait until he does and reward him.

Once your dog is reliably going to his spot, change your position when you send him there. Practice cueing him to go to his spot from several angles and distances. For instance, say "Go to your spot" when you're standing just a couple of steps left of it. After a few repetitions, move a couple of steps to the right of the spot and say, "Go to your spot" from there. Then move to another part of the room, then another, and so on and so forth. In the end, practice standing by the front door and asking him to go to his spot, just as you might when guests arrive.

Once your dog masters going to his spot, start training him to sit or down when he gets there. As soon as your dog's rear end hits the floor on the spot, reward him with another (maybe a different) tasty treat. Then "give him another cue (you can use "Yes" or "Okay") and let him move off the spot. Execute these steps at least 10 times per training session.

Now, you may add stay into your exercise. Stand next to your dog's spot. Ask him to sit or lie down, say "Stay" and wait for a second. When he executed your command, praise him with a cue word and give him a treat. After you deliver the treat, say "Okay" to release your dog from the stay and motivate him to get off the spot. Do this sequence at least 10 times every training session.

Progressively increase from one second to several seconds, but change the time so that sometimes you make the exercise easy (a shorter stay) and on other occasions, you make it hard (a longer stay). If your pooch starts to get up before you say your affirmative cue word, say "No" (or any cue word you'd like to represent 'no') and immediately ask him to sit or lie down on his spot again. Then make the exercise a little easier the next few times by asking your dog to hold the stay for a shorter time. Steer clear of pushing your dog to accelerate the progress or testing him to see how long he can hold the stay before getting up. This practice just sets your dog up to fail.

### **Succeeding Steps with His Other 'Humans'**

The next step in "Go to Your Spot" training is to recruit friends and family to help you conduct mock practice visits. Arrange to have someone come to the door. You will work with your dog to help him stay on his own.

Be prepared! This will likely take some time before he actually gets the drill. When you open the door, one of two things can happen.

Scenario A: Sometimes you leave your dog there on his spot while you talk to the person at the door, as if your visitor is a courier or delivery person. Your dog never gets to say hello. (However, you, the person or both of you should frequently toss treats to your dog to reward him for staying.)

Scenario B: At other times, invite the visitor in. Wait until the person sits down somewhere, and then release your dog to join you and your visitor.

When you have a friend help you with a mock visit, be sure to repeat the scenario over and over, at least 10 to 20 times. Practice makes perfect. With each repetition, it will become easier for him to do what you expect because he'll be less excited by the whole routine—especially when it's the same person at the door, over and over again.

Continue to recruit people to help you practice "Go to Your Spot" exercises until your dog reliably goes to his spot and stays there until you release him with your cue word. At this point, your dog should be able to perform his new "Go to Your Spot" skill perfectly about 90% of the time during training sessions. The toughest part for your pooch is to go to his spot and stay there in real-life situations; when he hasn't been able to do a few warm-up repetitions.

To prepare your dog for times when real visitors arrive, ask friends who are acquainted with your dog to drop by randomly when you're home. Then ask other friends who don't know your dog well to drop by, too. With plenty of practice, your dog will be able to go to his spot and stay there, even when neither of you knows who is at the other side of the door.

Eventually, when real visitors come to your home, you can ask your dog to go to his spot as soon as they knock or ring the doorbell. After letting your visitors in, ask them to sit down. Wait about a minute before releasing your dog from his spot to greet them. You may put t your dog on a leash if you think he might jump on your visitors or behave aggressively. After a minute or two of allowing your dog to greet people, ask him to lie down at your feet and stay. Give him something to keep him busy,

If you repeat the ritual above for a while, your dog should learn to settle down calmly when guests visit your home.

### **Greeting Barking**

In lieu with the "spot" training associated with visitors, dog owners should also learn and train their dogs about greeting barking. If your dog barks at people coming to the door, at people or dogs walking by your property, at people or dogs he sees on walks, his barking is accompanied by whining, tail wagging and other signs of friendliness, your dog is probably barking just to say "Hello.". He most likely barks the same way when family members come home.

Keep greetings low key. Train your dog to sit and stay when meeting people at the door so that he has something to do instead of barking. This will reduce his over excitement.

If your dog likes toys, keep a favorite toy near the front door and encourage him to pick up the toy before he greets you or your visitors. If he learns to hold a toy in his mouth, he'll be less inclined to bark. Although, he may still whine.

On walks, teach your dog that he can walk calmly past people and dogs without meeting them. To do this, distract your dog with special treats.

### **Steps to Take to Reduce Excessive Dog Barking**

One reason that it's so easy to live with canines is that they are one of the most expressive creatures in the world. They find a way to let their humans know what they need. Although, they often do this by barking or whining.

It's not pretty, however, when your dog barks to demand anything and everything, needed or not. This pattern of barking does not happen by accident. A demanding, noisy dog has been taught to be this way (normally, not in purpose). To get your dog to stop, you'll need to consistently not reward him for barking. Don't try to figure out exactly why he's barking. Ignore him instead.

Treatment for this kind of barking can be tough because, most of the time, pet parents unwittingly reinforce the behaviour—sometimes just with eye contact, touching, scolding or talking to their dogs. To canines, all of these human behaviours can count as rewarding attention. Try to use crystal-clear body language to convey to him that his attention seeking barking is inappropriate and going to fail.

To achieve this, try your best to never reward your dog for barking at you again. Sometimes, it's easier to avoid problems by eliminating the things that cause your dog to bark. If your dog barks to ask you to retrieve his toys from under the sofa, block the space so that the toys don't get stuck beyond his reach. If your dog barks at you when you're talking on the telephone or working on the computer, give him a tasty chew bone to occupy him before he starts to bark.

### **Compulsive Barking**

Dogs occasionally become compulsive barkers, meaning they bark in situations that aren't considered normal or they bark in a repetitive, fixed or rigid way. If your dog barks repeatedly for long periods of time, apparently at nothing or at things that wouldn't bother other dogs, such as shadows, light flashes, mirrors, open doors, the sky, etc., you may have a compulsive barker.

If your dog also does other repetitive behaviours like spinning, circling or jumping while barking, he may be a compulsive barker. To help reduce compulsive barking, you can try changing how you confine your dog. For instance, if your dog is tied or tethered, you can switch to keeping him loose in a safe fenced area, or if he's left alone for long periods of time, you should increase exercise, mental stimulation and social contact.

### **Anti-Bark Collars**

A variety of devices are designed to teach dogs to curtail barking. Most often, these are collars that deliver an unpleasant stimulus when your dog barks. The stimulus might be a loud noise, an ultrasonic noise, and a spray of citronella mist or a brief electric shock.

The collars that deliver noise are ineffective with most dogs. One study found that the citronella collar was at least as effective for eliminating barking as the electronic collar and was viewed more positively by owners.

Virtually all dogs become "collar-wise," meaning that they learn not to bark while wearing their anti-bark collars but revert to barking when they're not wearing them. Collars that work on a microphone system to pick up the sound of a dog's bark should not be used in a home with more than one dog because any bark from a dog can activate the collar.

Anti-bark collars are punishment devices and are not recommended as a first choice for dealing with a barking problem. This is especially true for barking that's motivated by fear, anxiety or compulsion. Before using an anti-bark collar, seek the help of your vet.

## **What NOT to Do**

Do not encourage your dog to bark at sounds, such as pedestrians or dogs passing by your home, birds outside the window, children playing in the street and car doors slamming, by saying "Who's there?" or getting up and looking out the windows.

Do not punish your dog for barking at certain sounds, like car doors slamming and kids playing in the street, but then encourage him to bark at other sounds, like people at the door. You must be consistent.

Unless a veterinary behaviourist advises you to do otherwise, never use punishment procedures if your dog is barking out of fear or anxiety. This could make him feel worse and, as a result, his barking might increase.

Never use a muzzle to keep your dog quiet for long periods of time or when you're not actively supervising him. Dogs can't eat, drink or pant to cool themselves while wearing muzzles, so making your dog wear one for long periods of time would be inhumane.

Never tie your dog's muzzle closed with rope, cord, rubber bands or anything else. Doing this is dangerous, painful and inhumane.

# Curbing the Instinct of Barking

## **CHAPTER THREE**

Barking is a natural form of canine communication. As with many behaviour problems, sometimes the natural instincts develop into unacceptable behaviour.

To curb the instinct, you have to determine why your dog is barking. This chapter will provide help to determine the root of the behavioural barking.

Nuisance barking. The primary reason for nuisance barking is to get your attention. This behaviour interrupts meals, phone calls, and quiet leisure time. Seemingly, your dog is bored and desires some stimulation.

Remove the cause and effect. If your dog barks to command you, don't respond. If your dog barks at you and you pick up the ball and play fetch, your dog has now trained you. Change the pattern. If your dog barks at you, perform three to five minutes of obedience commands, and then (if your dog cooperates) play.

The harder your dog tries to make a certain point, the further away she should be from achieving the goal. Repeated barking should be met with removal from the social situation (crated).

One of the easiest ways to correct nuisance barking when your dog isn't under leash control is a bark collar. Bark collars administer an automatic correction when your dog barks. As with remote collars, bark collars come in a variety of styles and should be properly researched before purchasing. Bark collars should only be used with nuisance-related barking. Using a bark collar for stress-related barking or threat barking may make the problem worse.

**Threat barking.** All dogs have basic territorial instincts, stronger in some breeds than others. Barking usually stops after the threat is taken away. Boundary agitation can strengthen the response intensity and is typically a contributor to uncontrolled threat barking. Remove boundaries for boundary agitation.

You probably will have an easier chance at changing the colour of your dog's fur before you can extinguish a truly territorial dog's bark. But with proper conditioning, your dog should stop barking after the leader says enough! When your dog barks (and there is a reason to bark), praise him for the initial response. Next, tell him to "sit" to create a new thought path. If your dog continues to bark, correct with "no" and cue him with "quiet" and "sit." Praise as soon as your dog stops barking. Timing is crucial. Catch your dog on the first bark.

**Remove the visual stimulus.** Prevent your dog from "patrolling" your house. If your dog insists on pacing from room to room, tether or post him with obedience commands. Reduce the intensity of the territorial response by counter-conditioning the boundary/agitation aspect of the behavior problem.

**Stress-related barking.** Stress-related barking is triggered by a visual or noise stimulus that causes an anxiety response and barking. How can we tell stress barking from territorial barking? Stress-related barking will not stop once the stimulus has passed because the resulting stress remains in the dog.

Most stress-related barking starts as simple territorial barking. Not knowing how to properly address the barking, the owners introduce a negative stimulus like yelling, penny cans, bark collars, or spray bottles. The negative stimulus of the "quick fix" gradually attaches a negative emotional response with the territorial instinct, thus creating the barking.

To address stress barking properly, you will have to address both the threat-barking response along with counter-conditioning to the trigger. The counter conditioning should be done when a real territorial threat (e.g., visitor) is not present. A strong foundation as a leader will be essential for your dog to defer to your redirection.

## **When Barking Becomes a Nuisance**

Barking is a natural way for dogs to express themselves -- it's a component of their language. Nobody would ever dream of "training away" or "punishing away" a feline that meows or a horse that whinnies. However, many people think that dogs shouldn't be permitted to bark or growl.

First of all you must realize and accept that dogs also have a language, and that a part of that language is to produce sounds. It's as simple as that. But considering that, it must be admitted that vocal expressions in dogs can produce powerful dimensions, and can be an issue for their surroundings including the people in the neighbourhood.

The main element to obtaining a solution to this is to learn to identify the point where barking has become exaggerated due to a need for attention, stress, or has changed into a "yelling" because no one listened when the dog tried to "talk" in a more normal way. It may happen in an isolated situation or it may be chronic. But in either case, if you have stress involved, it often comes out through the mouth.

No matter what the cause is, you can do something about it. You have to find the reason for the problem, what kind of barking you are confronted with, and understand the circumstances around it. Then you can identify ways to minimize the barking, remove whatever caused it, and in that way, get control of the problem.

The aim should not be to stop all barking for good. You should not be trying to take away from dogs the language they naturally have. The goal should be to get it down to a level and intensity that you can live with and that permits the dog to act in a way that is natural to him. And, of course, you need to look at your own reactions to a particular barking event since you may be over-reacting.

## **Increased Vocalization in Dogs**

### **Troublesome Crying, Whimpering and Barking:**

Substantial vocalization means unmanageable, excessive barking, whining or crying, often occurring at inappropriate times of the night or day. Such vocalization may be as a result of pain, illness, cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS), or could be associated with a decline in hearing in senior pets. CDS is frequently linked to night waking, during which excessive vocalization takes place. Dogs that are bred for work and high energy activities may be susceptible to excess barking.

Excessive barking can also be related to behavioural conditions, which may be managed by behaviour modification training. Additionally, there are some breeds that are more well-known for excessive and inappropriate barking. Many breeds of terrier, like the Yorkshire and Silky terriers, are inclined to barking without cause and may make the most of behavioural modification training.

### **Indicators and Types:**

Night vocalizations in senior dogs:

Excessive barking in working-breed dogs

Excessive barking in high energy, nervous dogs

Vocalization brought on by pain or illness

Vocalization troublesome to owners or others (neighbours)

### **Triggers:**

Health-related: disease, pain, CDS

Anxiety or conflict

Alarm barking - as a result of novel stimuli

Territorial - warning or guarding reaction to sounds from outdoors

Social or attention-seeking behaviour that is bolstered by verbal commands or return of

owner to room

Distress vocalization (like howling or whining) - usually because of separation from mother, family, social group or owner

Growling may be linked to antagonistic displays

Stereotypical behaviours or compulsive disorders

Breed - genetic characteristics

### **Diagnosis:**

If your dog's increased vocalization is unusual, you will need to have health problems eliminated before considering behaviour modification. The vet can perform a full medical work-up, including a chemical blood profile, complete blood count, urinalysis and

electrolyte panel, plus a complete physical exam. Possible incidents that may have led to this situation is likewise considered, and a complete history of your dog's behavioural health prior to the symptoms will be considered.

It is important to rule out a non-behavioural, physical reason behind the vocalization first.

Imaging can be useful for ruling out medical/neurological disorders.

### **Treatment:**

A strategy must be developed which is personalized to suit your dog and your personal living situations, your household, and the sort of problem, being sure to try and resolve the underlying cause before behavioural modifications will begin.

Don't reinforce the vocalization. This consists of punishing the behaviour, which is still considered to be attention. Instead, favourably reward your dog when he is calm and quiet and lead by example by remaining calm too. Also, counter-condition your dog to calm down when stimulated. Training your dog to be quiet on command will be the priority.



To stop your dog from becoming familiar with the attention received by barking or crying, a quiet response can be reinforced using head halters, bark-activated alarms, bark activated citronella collars, and disruptive devices such as alarms or water sprayers.

Another way that's been used to some success is to desensitize the dog to the outside stimuli using food treats until the response threshold is very high. Becoming more tuned in to the triggers that induce your dog to bark excessively will assist you to distract your dog before he becomes excited or anxious.

Medications may be advised if there's real anxiety, discord, excessive responsiveness to stimuli or a compulsive disorder.

### **Management:**

The dog must be brought back to the vet or to a behaviour specialist to change the program according to your dog's particular response. Obedience training, head halter training and quiet command training are often effective in dogs. Dogs should be habituated and socialized to a variety of stimuli and environments throughout development, including to other people and pets. This desensitizes the animal to novel experiences, reducing anxiety, and over-excitation.

# Howling and Whining

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

Howling is one of many forms of vocal communication used by dogs, and has a direct connection to barking. Just with barking, dogs howl get noticed, to get hold of others and to announce their presence.

Some dogs also howl as a result of high-pitched sounds, like emergency vehicle sirens or musical instruments.

## **Howling**

### **Issues to Rule-Out First**

#### **Separation Anxiety Howling**

If your neighbours call you and tell you that your dog is howling when you are at work, your dog's extreme howling may be brought on by separation anxiety. Separation anxiety howling only takes place when a dog is left alone or else separated from his human. This type of howling is usually coupled with at least one other characteristic of separation anxiety, like pacing, destruction, elimination, depression.

#### **Health-related Causes**

Dogs sometimes howl when they're injured or unwell. If your dog starts howling or howls more than ever before, take him to a vet to eliminate sickness and injury prior to doing other things.

### **How to Handle Excessive Howling**

#### **Howling in Responds to Sounds**

If your dog howls as a result of some kind of trigger, such as another dog howling or a nearby siren, he'll most likely stop when the sound stops. This kind of howling usually isn't excessive -unless, of course, the triggers happen often. If they do, you should use desensitization and counter-conditioning to aid your dog learn to be quiet.

#### **Systematic Desensitization and Counter-conditioning**

When the issue is rooted in how a dog feels with regards to a particular thing, often it isn't enough to just teach him a different behaviour -like to fetch a toy rather than howling, for instance. Instead, it's best to alter his motivation and feelings, which are the fundamental reasons for the behaviour issue in the first place.

Systematic desensitization and counter-conditioning are two typical treatments for fears, anxiety, phobias and aggression -basically any behaviour problem which involves arousal or emotions. It's often most reliable to use these two methods together when trying to solve animal behaviour problems.

Some dogs discover howling can get them attention from people. If your dog howls because of this, his howling will often occur in your presence when he wants attention, food or desired objects. If your dog howls to obtain your attention or "ask" you for things

he wants, like food or toys, you have to teach him a couple of things to be successful in curbing his behaviour.

For starters, he must learn that howling doesn't work. Secondly, he also must learn that being quiet will work. If your dog understands that howling makes him invisible to you and being quiet earns him your attention as well as all the great stuff he wants, he'll quickly figure out how to curb his vocal behaviour.

### **Disregard your Dog's Attention-Seeking Howling**

To prevent accidentally rewarding your dog when he howls, completely ignore him as soon as he starts making noise. Don't look at him, touch him or speak to him. Don't make an effort to scold him either. Dogs, like kids, often find any attention rewarding -even if it's negative one. So scolding your dog might make his howling behavior worse. Just pretend your pet is invisible. If you find it hard to get this done, try folding your arms across your chest and avoiding him completely.

### **Reward your Dog for being Quiet**

It's very easy to forget to focus on your dog when he's being quiet. If you want your pet to learn to stop howling for attention, you'll have to reward quiet behavior. At random give your dog treats and attention when he isn't making noise. It's also advisable to make and adhere to a new rule: Your pet doesn't get anything he wants (food, toys, access to the outdoors, treats, petting, etc.) until he's been quiet for a minimum of five seconds. If your dog howls so as to get your attention, ignore him until he's quiet, as described above. Then, after few seconds of silence, you can focus on him again.

### **Finding Help**

Because howling issues can be tough to work with, don't think twice to enlist the help of a professional.

### **Whining**

Whining is yet again, one of the many forms of dog vocal communication and has a close connection with barking. Dogs most often whine when they're seeking attention, when they're excited, when they're anxious or when they're trying to appease you.

### **Why Do Dogs Whine?**

#### **Appeasement Actions**

Some dogs whine exceedingly when interacting with people and other dogs, usually while adopting a submissive posture.

#### **Greeting Behaviour**

Some dogs whine during greetings. This sort of vocalization is usually stimulated by excitement and may be inclined to dogs or people.

#### **Seeking Attention**

Some dogs whine in the presence of their owners to get their attention, rewards or desired objects.

#### **Anxiety**

Some dogs whine as a result of stressful situations. In this context, whining at times seems involuntarily.

## **Other Issues That May Cause Whining**

### **Separation Anxiety**

If your dog only whines right before you leave or during your absence, he may have separation anxiety.

### **Injury or Medical Condition**

Dogs often whine in response to pain or an agonizing condition. If you notice that your dog vocalizes often or has suddenly begun to vocalize, it's vital that you take her to the vet to rule out medical causes.

## **How to Handle Excessive Whining**

### **Appeasement Whining**

Dogs can try to appease people or other dogs when they perceive a threat or aggression being directed at them. Appeasement behaviours include holding the ears back, tucking the tail, crouching or rolling over on the back, avoiding eye contact or turning the body sideways to the perceived threat. Appeasement whining is also a normal canine behaviour.

You may be able to reduce your dog's appeasement whining by building her confidence. Try taking her to an obedience class that uses reward-based training techniques. You and your dog can also try trick-training classes or dog sports like agility, fly ball and musical freestyle. Playing fun, interactive games with your dog, like tug and fetch, can increase your dog's confidence. Avoid physical and verbal punishment.

### **Whining During Greetings**

If your dog whines when greeting people, you can divert his attention to his favourite toys.

Simply telling your dog to be quiet during greetings usually isn't effective because, unless you've taken specific steps to train your dog what the word "Quiet" means, he won't understand you.

Furthermore, most dogs whine when greeting people because they're excited, and in an incredibly aroused state, they may not have control over their behaviour. Instead, use management procedures to help prevent your pooch from becoming overly excited.

### **Anxious Whining**

Whining as a result of anxiety is difficult to eliminate unless the cause of anxiety is removed. Anxious whining is usually accompanied by other nervous behaviors, such as pacing, circling and licking. Many anxious dogs do not seem able to control their whining when under extreme stress.

Some medications may help reduce your dog's anxiety. Consult your pet doctor or a board-certified veterinary behaviourist to learn more about anti-anxiety medications. Do not give your dog any kind of medication for a behaviour problem unless directed to do so by a veterinarian.

## **Steps to Avoid Whining**

In addition to not reinforcing whining behaviour, you need to reward your dog for being quiet. Teach your dog that she must always be quiet before receiving your attention, play or treats. Regularly seek out your dog to give her attention and rewards when she's not whining. When your dog understands that silence works well to get your attention, she won't feel as motivated to whine.

Don't hesitate to contact a professional in your area. Many pros offer group or private classes that can give you and your dog lots of great skills to learn and games to play that will reduce her appeasement whining, whining during greetings and attention-seeking whining.

# Common Questions

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **My dog is barking excessively – what can I do?**

Dogs bark excessively for numerous reasons including boredom, excitement, distress, territorial defence and fear and anxiety. Therefore the solutions to problem barking differ from one dog to the next.

In the first instance, it's highly recommended that you talk to your vet who can refer you to a veterinary behavioural specialist. Vet behaviouralist can help to determine the underlying cause of the barking and then develop a tailor-made treatment plan for your dog.

Treatment usually involves behavioural modification training. In some rare cases the use of veterinary medications in combination with behavioural modification may be required. Behaviour specialists tend to ask owners a lot of questions and may offer to come out to the house to observe your dog in its own environment in order to identify barking 'triggers'. Triggers may include seeing or hearing a person walking past or the neighbours dog.

Training should be based on the principles of positive reinforcement. That is, reward 'good' behavior – when the dog is quiet give him food treat or a pat on the head and avoid rewarding 'unwanted' behavior – when the dog barks ignore the behaviour.

Training

should not involve punishment which tends to exacerbate the barking problem.

### **My neighbour dog is constantly barking and disturbing me. What can I do?**

Usually, problems with barking dogs can be resolved without resorting to police or courts. If you do eventually wind up in court, however, a judge will be more sympathetic

if you first made at least some effort to work things out informally. Here are the steps to

take when you're losing patience (or sleep) over a neighbour's noisy dog:

Ask your neighbour to keep the dog quiet. Sometimes owners are blissfully unaware that there's a problem. If the dog barks for hours every day -- but only when it's left alone -- the owner may not know that you're being driven crazy.

If you can establish some rapport with the neighbour, try to agree on specific actions to

alleviate the problem. After you agree on a plan, set a date to talk again in a couple of weeks.

Try mediation. Mediators are trained to listen to both sides, identify problems, keep everyone focused on the real issues, and suggest compromises. A mediator won't make a decision for you, but will help you and your neighbour agree on a resolution. Many cities have community mediation groups which train volunteers to mediate disputes in their own neighbourhoods.

Look up the law. In some places, barking dogs are covered by a specific state or local ordinance. If there's no law aimed specifically at dogs, a general nuisance or noise ordinance makes the owner responsible. And someone who allows a dog to bark after

numerous warnings from police may be arrested for disturbing the peace.

Call the police, if you think a criminal law is being violated. Summoning a police cruiser to a neighbour's house obviously will not improve your already-strained relations. But if nothing else works, and the relationship with your neighbour is shot anyway, give the police a try.

### **Should I use an anti-barking collar to treat my dog's barking problem?**

There are some products on the market that are aimed at preventing dogs from barking such as sound collars - emit a high-pitched sound when the dog barks- , electronic collars

- deliver an electric shock to the dog when it barks - and citronella collars - spray the dog's face with citronella scent when it barks.

Majority of vets and professionals DON'T recommend the use of these devices to stop your dog barking for a number of reasons:

This type of training is called 'punishment' as the dog is effectively punished by the collar for every bark. Punishment, as a method of training, is often ineffective as dogs often do not associate the punishment (the citronella spray, sound or shock) with the behaviour.

This type of behavioural modification does not tend to be successful because it fails to address the underlying cause of the behaviour. Dogs bark for many reasons: play, fear, separation anxiety, environmental factors, and boredom. These devices will not necessarily solve the underlying cause of the barking and will only temporarily mask the problem.

Sometimes it is appropriate for dogs to bark (e.g. as a means of communication) in which case the collar punishes them for normal behaviour. Because the collar does not discriminate between problem barking and normal canine behavior, there is a potential for abuse if the collar is routinely left on for too long.

The treatment of nuisance behaviours such as excessive barking should begin by attempting to address the root cause of the problem. It is a good idea to see a veterinarian or animal behaviouralist to assess nuisance behaviour and provide advice on how best to address it.

### **What can I do if my dog has separation anxiety?**

Dogs are highly social "pack" animals that prefer to live in groups. Separation anxiety is a common behavioural problem that occurs when the dog is separated from their "pack" which is usually represented by the owner/s. Separation anxiety is characterized by signs of distress when affected animals are separated from an owner or family group to which the animal is highly attached. Behavioural responses may include destructiveness, house soiling, excessive barking, digging or pacing, among other signs.

The goal of treatment is to teach the pet how to be calm and relaxed during the owner's absence. It involves changes in pet-owner interactions, changes in leaving and return protocols, decreasing the anxiety associated with owner departure, teaching the pet how to be left alone, environmental changes and management.

Owners should consult their veterinarian for advice. They can either help you directly or they may offer referral to a veterinary behavioural specialist.

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## CONCLUSION

Don't forget, barking is natural. It's a vital means of communication for dogs. But at times problems can develop. As the pack leader, it's your job to step up and control excessive barking. Remember the following guidelines stop nuisance barking once and for all.

Fix dog problem behaviour and follow through.

Command your dog to quit barking using a look, a sound, or a physical correction. But don't end there. Your dog may pause and then go back to what he was doing. Be patient

and train him until he actually GETS it.



Stay calm when training and stopping your dog from excessive barking. Constant barking can be aggravating; however, you won't be able to fix the dog behavior problem if you're frustrated. The truth is your dog will mirror your energy. If you're irritated, he will be, too. And barking is a great release for that frustrated energy. Take a moment to curb your own internal barking first.

Stop the barking by challenging your dog mentally and physically. Excessive barking is often the result of pent-up energy. If this is the case, the solution is simple: release that energy in more productive ways.

And lastly, get professional help to stop dog barking. When you brought this dog into your life, you made a commitment to provide the care he needs. Prevent dog barking and other dog behaviour problems by calling in a canine professional to help him cope with a behaviour issue.



**THANK  
YOU**

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