

# BARKING & DOGS

Barking can be the result of your dog being pre-genetically disposed to barking, like hounds. If you have a breed that's known to bark, then working on the "quiet" command and providing toys and outlets for their energy should help.

Anxiety-related barking, especially if it is a new behavior, may be the result of a medical issue, so you should take your dog to the vet. If the vet doesn't find anything medically wrong, you need to determine when your dog barks, for how long your dog barks, and what is causing them to bark. If your dog barks when you're not at home, you can ask your neighbors, try driving/walking around the block while watching and listening, or set up a camera when you leave. By observing your dog, you can hopefully discover the cause to your dog's barking.

## **Social Isolation / Attention Seeking / Separation Anxiety**

*Your dog may be barking because of boredom or loneliness if:*

- They are left alone for long periods of time without interaction.
- Their environment is barren without playmates or toys.
- You have a puppy or young dog under 3 years of age and they don't have other outlets for their energy.
- You have a particularly active dog (like herding or sporting breeds) who need a "job" to be satisfied.



### *Recommendations:*

Walk your dog daily. Teach your dog new commands or to play fetch and practice them every day for 5 - 10 minutes. Take an obedience class. Provide toys to keep your dog busy when you aren't home. Rotating the toys helps to keep them interesting. Keep your dog inside when you can't supervise them. Take your dog with you to work sometimes, if possible. If your dog barks for attention, make sure you are spending enough time with them. Doggie daycare or having a friend/neighbor visit your dog can be good if you work long hours. Ignore your dog until they stop barking for at least three seconds and then reward them.

## **Frustration / Learned Barking**

*Your dog may be barking due to frustration or as a learned behavior if:*

- The barking occurs when strangers are seen through the window or fence, or when on a leash.
- Your dog's posture appears threatening while barking – tail held high and ears up and forward.
- You've encouraged your dog to be responsive to people and noises.



### *Recommendations:*

When your dog begins to bark, interrupt them without calling their name or startling them. You can wait for them to take a breath. The moment they are quiet, reward them. Once they begin to understand this behavior, you can start using the “quiet” command. Avoid yelling “quiet” before your dog actually knows what it means. Teach your dog that strangers are friends and that good things happen when people are around. Limit your dog's access to seeing things that might cause them to bark when you aren't home. If your dog barks when you're home, redirect their attention by giving them a command like “sit” and give them a treat. Have your dog spayed/ neutered to decrease frustration.

## **Fears and Phobias**

*Your dog may be barking out of fear if:*

- Barking happens when there are loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks.
- Your dog's posture indicates fear – ears, back or tail held low.

### *Recommendations:*

Identify the source of your dog's fear and desensitize them to it. You can also try muting the noise from outside by leaving your dog in a basement or windowless bathroom and leaving a fan, television, or radio on. Close curtains or doors to avoid your dog seeing something that frightens them, too.

## **What Not to Do**

Bark collars are not recommended, especially electric shock collars. These specially designed collars deliver an aversive to your dog when they bark. However, if your dog barks due to anxiety or fear, this collar will not solve the problem, but make it worse. These collars do not address the cause of your dog's barking, so your dog may become destructive or aggressive since they feel they can no longer bark.