

Why Does My Dog BARK?

Excessive Barking

Dogs use barking to communicate. If you listen to your dog's bark you will note that she uses different kind of barks to communicate different things. Higher tone barks are usually associated with play, excitement and/or greeting of people or other dogs. Lower tone barks are usually associated with alerting, fear and/or aggression.

**Punishment is not an effective way to modify behavior.
The dog will generalize the punishment to anything it is looking at when it receives the punishment.
The punishment will not work and the dog will develop a fear of the environment where the punishment is taking place**

It is unreasonable to assume that you can eliminate barking, dogs bark, it is what they do. Shock collars or Bark Collars that deliver an electric shock or unpleasant blast of liquid to barking dogs are inhumane because they are punishing a dog for communicating. The kindest way to modify barking is to reduce your dog's motivation for barking.

Reduce Boredom

Leaving a dog outside unsupervised is a recipe for boredom barking. Being social animals a bored dog is a lonely dog that is seeking interaction. The problem is if you give the dog attention after she barks you have reinforced the barking! Instead it is much easier to supervise your dog while

outside, wait for the dog to empty herself and then play a quick game and head back inside. This sequence of events sets your dog up to hurry up and empty herself quickly and reinforces this by playing a game.

Barking for Attention

"Watch this!" your dog says to herself before she starts barking for attention. As her owner's face reddens with anger, her tail begins to wag. Eventually the owner barks, "quiet!!!!" the dog has gotten the attention she wanted and it works perfectly to maintain the barking behavior. The short demand for quiet even sounds like a bark to the dog, so now she thinks her owner is joining in. What fun!



Barking on Cue

To prevent this scenario, teach your dog to bark on cue by ringing your own doorbell. Most dogs will bark when you ring the door bell. If the dog does not bark when you ring the door bell do whatever else prompts barking. When the dog barks click and treat the dog for barking. Repeat this but this time say "speak" immediately before you ring the door bell. Do this five times. Now say "speak" in an excited way and hopefully your dog will bark. If not go back to the last step a few more times.

The DogSmith

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Eventually you will have the dog barking on the cue "speak."

Now it gets fun!

Cue the dog to speak. The dog barks and this time after the bark say "quiet." The dog has no clue what this means and will STOP barking and give you a puzzled look. Click and treat! This is what you are really after. You want your dog to bark to alert you something is going on and then once you have checked it out, you can tell the dog quiet. From this moment on you will never click and treat your dog for speak again, but only for quiet. Only being quiet pays money. J

Calm is Quiet

In order to prevent excessive barking you want a calm and relaxed dog. The way to get that is to exercise your dog. Every dog is different, some dogs need hours of exercise per day others are happy with 10 minutes of full speed running, others are happy with a walk around the block. Know how much exercise your dog needs and when she is tuckered out ask her to lay down. Observe your dog for signs of relaxation. When she relaxes, calmly give her a treat. Do not click. This is the one time we don't want the startling effect of the clicker.

The idea here is to reinforce calm because a calm dog is more likely to be a quiet dog.

Chew Toys as Anti-Barking Tool

Another fabulous way to prevent barking is to provide your dog with different chew toys every few days. Just like us, dogs get

bored with the same old stuff. Rotate your toys and chew toys by changing them out every few days and you will have done some great training to set the dog up for success.

Owner Absent Barking

If your dog barks and/or howls when you are gone, please tell your trainer, your dog may have separation anxiety. The behavior modification for separation anxiety is different then for excessive barking.

Be Realistic

If you own a Sheltie, or Terrier you are going to have to learn to live with some barking. Certain dogs are so genetically programmed to bark they even do so in their sleep. Anti-barking a dog robs the dog of their voice and can only be even considered as a last resort after extensive training under the supervision of a professional.

Build Appropriate Behaviors—Quiet, Calm, Hush rather than punishing undesirable behaviors
It's More Fun For You &

Understanding Why

Understanding why your dog is barking will help you set your dog up for success. In all training we want the dog to rehearse success not failure. With barking this is especially true. It is also so much easier to prevent excessive barking then it is to fix it after the fact. Don't take a quiet dog for granted, reinforce quiet just like you do other behaviors.

