



BARKING TIP SHEET

Never Forget, Barking is Normal Healthy Canine Behaviour!

Barking is communication. It is imperative you listen to the message. Dogs bark for reasons. Understanding why a dog is barking is crucial to solving the problem, if indeed there is a problem. Often when people find barking an unacceptable behaviour, they find other normal canine behaviours unacceptable as well. This doesn't make for a happy life for dog or owner. To help address the reason behind barking look for clues such as body posture and the meanings behind the cadence of barks. It all conveys something. Know your dog. Folks who are very attentive to their pets are often accused of coddling them. Don't buy it. Your dog's feelings & needs are real and deserve to be addressed. Some barking problems can be resolved with little effort while finding solutions to others can be frustrating. In difficult cases seek help from a Vet Behaviorist. Here are a few tips & recommendations you can try.

Understand some of the reason for barking

- Lack of socialization
- Lack of adequate exercise & mental stimulation
- Need for quality individual attention
- Stress
- Hunger
- Fear
- Pain
- Stranger alerting
- Happiness & excitement
- Boredom
- Guarding behaviour
- Being isolated & excluded from gatherings
- Medical issues
- Breed characteristic
- A learned habit from another dog

Find the reason for the barking & you find the solution. Try acknowledging that you see what he is barking at by standing next to your dog and looking at what he is looking at. Let him bark for a minute. Then tell him that is enough & praise him for stopping. It's amazing how often this acknowledgement is all they want from you. If a dog has never been left alone and now must start, this will likely be a high anxiety experience for them. Start leaving your dog for short (1 to 10 minutes) periods to acclimatize the dog to being alone. However, full blown separation anxiety may require professional help. Animals left in crates or tiny spaces, no food or water for extended periods often suffer deep anxiety and physical discomfort. Getting rid of the crate is a quick fix for many. Ample room to move freely can work wonders to reduce stress and barking. Dogs must be able to relieve themselves so if left for longer than 3 or 4 hours have a family member or friend look in on them and take them for a walk.

General Barking

- Seek Professional help
- Seek to understand the underlying reason for the barking
- Play with your dog and give them undivided attention when appropriate
- Provide mental stimulation through socializing activities that include more people and other dogs
- Teach a clear consistent signal to communicate you want barking to stop; a shoosh, a click and lots of praise when they do obey your request.

Tips to reduce barking when your dog is home alone

- Try Doggy daycare (not for every dog) even periodically.
- Arrange for someone to visit or walk your dog to provide breaks.
- Exercise your dog before leaving them alone.
- Keep a Radio or TV playing.
- Do not crate, instead give adequate space for movement and stretching.
- Avoid leaving your dog for long periods.
- Make sure your dog is fed and has access to fresh water before you leave.
- Provide safe toys.
- Restrict their views to outdoors can help. Yet for some dogs allowing a view of outside eases boredom and removes some of the stress of not knowing who or what is causing a noise. Watching the world go by can help them occupy their time.
- A severely anxious dog may need a Vet Behaviourist.

Barking when left outside

- Don't leave your dog feeling vulnerable to threats; tied or chained.
- When your dog barks to be let inside, bring your dog inside.
- When outside provide plenty of space & comfortable clean dry shelter.
- Don't leave your dog outside hungry & without fresh water.
- Provide toys.
- Limit the time they are outside and never leave them unprotected in hot or harsh weather or fireworks.

Barking at People and Animals

- Seek Professional help.
- Keep a good distance from the catalyst causing the barking.
- If the barking is wanting to greet, have your dog sit quietly then reward with the greet.
- Do not punish your dog but instead use a calm voice and move from the trigger.
- Reward & praise when your dog doesn't bark.
- Allow your dog off leash free time whenever possible.
- Safely introduce your dog to as many people and situations as possible without using force.

A multitude of well-written books, YouTube videos, animal experts and experienced dog owners can help you. Modifying your dogs behaviour will take patience, repetition, praise, rewards, desensitization, massage and understanding of canine behaviour and body language. What you never want to use are anti-bark shock collars!

If you can't solve the barking on your own take your dog for a medical check up. . A vet may further recommend a vet behaviourists or credentialed trainer. The training industry is unregulated so do your homework before allowing anyone access to your dog. If vocal cord cutting (cordectomy), shock collars, prong or choke collars are recommended, grab your dog and run. Citronella spray collars can also be stressful, traumatizing and highly irritating. Dogs, like children, go through stages of development and learning. Barking and any behaviour can present, evolve or stop on its own. Be patient.