

Is the Barking Driving You Crazy?



Some of the most common dog behavioral questions I receive deal with barking dogs. How can I stop my dog from barking at the window? How do I prevent my dog from barking on walks? Why does my dog bark at me when I'm on the phone? Here are three tips to keep the barking from driving you crazy.

First, understand barking happens for a wide range of reasons.

Some dogs may happily bark while they play. Others will bark out of excitement when people come to the door. Still others will fearfully bark at any new environmental stimulus they see (whether it's a person, another animal, or an inanimate object). Some dogs relieve stress by barking. Others will bark because they are bored. All types of barking tend to have the same result for the humans...we get frustrated and annoyed if it goes on too long. Understanding the reason for the barking is critical to helping the dog.

Second, based on the reason for the barking, begin to implement some management options.

There is no one size fits all when it comes to managing barking. What will work for one dog, may not work for another. You will need to experiment to see what works best for your dog. Here are a few methods to get you started.

- **Distract and redirect the dog** – This works especially well if your dog is frustrated or bored. Provide an alternative behavior such as coming to you to get pieces of chicken or steak, playing an interactive puzzle game, or chewing on a stuffed Kong toy. The goal here is to give the dog something else to do.
- **Manage the environment** – Practice makes perfect. Barking is one behavior we don't want the dog to perfect. Set up the environment to prevent barking. Cover the windows so your dog can't see out of them, or move him to another room when delivery people come by. Anticipate the times your dog might bark and break the cycle before it starts.
- **Homeopathic remedies** – Essential oils and Bach Flower essences can have a calming effect on many dogs. For dogs who are stressed or overstimulated, you might try Bach Rescue Remedy in the water bowl, or lavender essential oil placed on a towel or bedding. You can also try a diffuser with dog-soothing pheromones, such as Comfort Zone®.

Third, train your dog by rewarding quiet behavior

If you are home with your dog, give him a treat, praise, a toy or petting when he responds by being quiet. Let him know that good things happen when he is well-behaved.

The methods mentioned above are my most often recommended solutions to barking dogs. Give them a try and let me know how it's going.

Information provided at:

<http://www.robinkbennett.com/2014/10/20/is-the-barking-driving-you-crazy/>



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