

Solving Problem Barking

Dogs communicate many things through different vocalizations. Understanding why your dog is barking will allow you to properly manage the problem behavior.

- ◆ Sometimes barking can be caused by illness or injury, check with your vet to rule out medical causes before starting behavior modification.
- ◆ The first step to stopping unwanted barking is finding out what is causing your dog to bark. Watch your dog and find out what they are barking at and when.
- ❖ **Territorial Barking and Alarm Barking**
 - Barking at people or things approaching areas they consider “theirs” or barking at things they find “alarming”
 - Desensitize to triggers – praise and reward when your dog sees the stimulus
 - Practice an incompatible behavior such as “place” (sitting on a mat or going to a crate)
 - Practice a “quiet” cue
 - Do not leave your dog unattended where they can practice barking
- ❖ **Attention-Seeking Barking, Greeting Barking, Frustration Barking**
 - Barking when they want something – (attention, toy, or a playmate)
 - Ignore barking and reward calm quiet behavior
 - Don’t get your dog excited when you come into the house
 - Practice place (see above) when people enter the house
 - Practice impulse control exercises
- ❖ **Compulsive Barking**
 - Barking repetitively often paired with repetitive movement (i.e. pacing a fence)
 - Try breaking the pattern and giving mental stimulation (i.e. feeder puzzle)
 - You may need to consult with a Veterinary Behaviorist
- ❖ **Separation Anxiety**
 - Barking due to being left alone
 - Give them something to do, like a stuffed kong, when you leave
 - Practice “Short Departures”
 - See Separation Anxiety handout for more information
- ◆ Always reward calm quiet behavior in all situations
- ◆ Practice and solidify new behaviors, like place or quiet, before using them to help with barking
- ◆ Don’t encourage barking in some situations but not others – this is confusing for your dog
- ◆ Never punish your dog for barking
- ◆ Never tie your dog’s mouth shut or use a muzzle to keep them quiet

Remember, your dog is barking to communicate something.
Always be patient and compassionate when teaching your dog quiet, calm behavior.

If you should need any additional support or have questions,
please feel free to reach out to the Peggy Adams Animal Rescue League Behavior Department.
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