

# Barking Dogs



Animal  
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*A dog barks because he's trying to tell you something. If he's left alone outside, one of the more common reasons for barking, he might be saying "I'm bored and lonely." Or, if your dog isn't getting enough exercise, it might be that he's frustrated and anxious.*

## The Most Common Reasons Why Dogs Bark:

- Distress, vocalizations due to fear or separation anxiety
- Excitement or greeting
- During play
- To gain attention or to make requests
- Frustration
- Socially facilitated barking (e.g., hearing other dogs bark)
- Compulsive behavior

## What Not to Do

- Do not encourage the dog to bark at passers-by or people coming to the door. Encouragement can take the form of saying, "Who's there?" or getting up and looking out of the window.
- Do not punish the dog for barking at certain sounds (car doors slamming, kids playing in the street) while encouraging him to bark at other sounds (people at the door). You must be consistent!
- Never use punishment procedures for a dog who is barking from fear or anxiety, unless the advice of a Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist or Veterinary Behaviorist. This could make the dog feel worse, which could in turn cause the barking to escalate.
- Never use a muzzle to keep a dog quiet for long periods of time, or while a dog is unsupervised. The dog cannot eat, drink or cool himself while wearing a muzzle, and this would be extremely cruel.

- Never tie a dog's muzzle closed with rope, cord or rubber bands. This is dangerous, painful and inhumane.

## To Prevent Barking

It is important to take care of your dog's emotional and physical needs. Make sure that your dog has enough to do. Interactive play and walks can help your problem barker keep calm and relaxed, and therefore less inclined to bark.

If he starts howling the minute you leave, give him his favorite chew toy to help keep him occupied. You can also try to leave the stereo, radio or television on at a normal level. This can mask outside noises that might send your pet into a barking fit.

Is your dog spayed or neutered? The desire to mate can lead to barking from frustration.

## When your dog is barking, try the following techniques to encourage him to stop:

### Shaker Can

Fill an aluminum can with a few pennies and tape the can shut. Whenever your dog barks, shake the can and say, "Quiet." This tells your dog that barking offends your ears; now, you can respond by offending his ears with the shaker can. If he quiets, follow with praise and petting. If not, shake the can again. If he still barks, toss the can to the floor in front of him. It may take several attempts over several days, so be persistent.

Make several of them, and place them in strategic spots around the house so that you can correct your barking dog promptly. Remember, the quicker the correction, the more effective it will be.

Try the shaker can method if your dog barks whenever he is left home alone. Exit your house as if you were leaving; once outside, listen for barking. If he barks, rattle the shaker can outside the door. What you're trying to do is teach him that barking brings no response. Praise him when he is quiet, then re-enter the house and try it again. Repeat this regularly.

### ***Bitter Apple***

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Offend your dog's sensitive sense of taste. Begin by saying "Quiet," when he barks inappropriately, and spray Bitter Apple on his gum line. Repeat if necessary. Praise him when he quiets.

### ***Ignore Your Dog***

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If your dog is barking to get your attention, the best solution is to walk away from him and ignore the bad behavior. Praise him and lavish attention on him after he has quieted down for a couple of minutes. He will learn that barking gets him nothing, while silence gets results!



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