



STOP THE BARKING TIP SHEET

It's important to realize that not everyone is suited to living with dogs. Think about it, barking for a dog is something as natural as wanting to communicate with others, and as an inherent drive as wanting to be heard. Who among us doesn't know this feeling? Dogs need to bark, and they need to do so without being punished. Think hard about living with a dog before you decide to do it. If you perceive barking as bad behaviour, rolling in mud to be forbidden, and the thought of dog fur woven into your car seats, behind every door, and on every piece of clothing you own, intolerable, then do yourself and the dog world a favour, and find love and companionship elsewhere.

When your dog is vocal and often lets you know how he's feeling, listen closely to his message. Dogs bark for a reason. To know why a dog is barking is crucial to solving a barking problem, if indeed there is a problem. If you don't spend a lot of time with your dog, it will be difficult to interpret the reasons he barks. An outside opinion and consultation with a positive reward-based trainer can provide insight. Attending to an animal's needs can be time consuming and difficult, but that is the nature of taking on the care of a sentient being. Becoming frustrated is understandable, but resorting to the use of aversive tools such as shock collars is unforgivable.

Don't despair. There are solutions. Find the reason for the barking & you will find the solution. To decipher the meaning behind the barking, look for clues in your dog's posture, pitch and cadence of bark. Watch, observe, and give your dog plenty of attention. Those sensitive to their pet's emotional needs are accused of pampering them. Don't buy it. A dog's feelings & needs deserve to be attended to. Certain barking problems can be resolved with minor changes in their environment. While for other cases, finding a solution can be elusive. In troublesome cases, seek help from a vet behaviourist.

Here are some common reasons your dog may bark:

- Lack of socialization and attention
- Lack of exercise & mental stimulation
- Significant changes in environment
- Stress
- Hunger
- Fear / Separation anxiety
- Pain
- Stranger alerting
- Happiness, excitement, greeting
- Boredom
- Guarding / territorial barking
- Being isolated & excluded from family gatherings
- Medical issues
- A breed characteristic
- A learned habit from another dog

It may be as simple as your dog is looking for acknowledgement. Give it to him. Show an interest in what he is barking at by standing next to him. Let him bark for a few seconds. Then tell him it's ok, that's enough, & praise him for stopping. It's amazing how often this acknowledgement is all they want.

For dogs never left alone and must start now will experience some anxiety. Try leaving your dog alone for brief periods (10 seconds to 10 minutes). Build slow. Once they understand you are coming back, their anxiety will lessen with each occurrence. For dogs suffering full-blown separation anxiety, you will need the professional help of a vet behaviourist. Animals left in crates and tiny

spaces often suffer deep anxiety and physical discomfort. Getting rid of the crate is an immediate fix for many. Ample room to move freely can work wonders to reduce stress and barking. Have a family member or friend visit, feed them, and take them for a walk.

TIPS TO TRY

GENERAL BARKING

- Seek to understand the underlying reason for the barking
- Play with your dog and give him undivided attention.
- Provide mental stimulation through games, socializing activities with people, and other dogs.
- Teach a clear, consistent signal to communicate you want barking to stop; a firm “shush” or “quiet.”
- Shush, and praise when they do.

BARKING WHEN HOME ALONE

- Send your dog to daycare for a couple of days a week. Make sure it is the [right](#) daycare.
- Arrange for a person 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 extended periods of time.
- Before you leave, feed your dog, provide fresh water, and safe toys.
- Restricting their views to outdoors can help some. Yet for others, allowing a view of the outside eases boredom and removes some of the stress of not knowing who is causing a noise. Watching the world go by can help them occupy their time and feel less lonely.
- Create a [life size stuffed dummy](#) attired in your clothing to fill in when you go out.
- For anxious dogs, consult with a vet behaviourist.

BARKING WHILE IN THE YARD

- Don't leave your dog feeling vulnerable to threats by tying or chaining him.
- When your dog barks to come inside, bring him in.
- Provide plenty of space & a comfortable clean shelter.
- Don't leave your dog hungry & without fresh water.
- Provide safe toys.
- Limit the time outside, especially in hot or inclement weather
- Never leave your pets outside during thunderstorms or fireworks.

BARKING AT PEOPLE AND ANIMALS WHEN IN PUBLIC

- Burn off your dog's energy with play and exercise before taking him to public places.
- Keep a vigilant lookout so you can distance from the catalyst before the barking starts.
- If the barking is to greet, have your dog quiet down first. Then reward and allow the greet.
- Don't punish. Use a calm voice and move away from the trigger.
- Don't forget to reward & praise when your dog doesn't or stops barking.
- Allow your dog as much off leash time as possible every day.
- Introduce your dog to as many people and situations as possible without using force.

Altering your dog's behaviour requires dedication, perseverance, repetition, positive reinforcement, rewards, desensitization, insight into their emotions, and understanding of their body language. What it does NOT call for is an anti-bark shock collar!

When your dog keeps barking excessively, consider a vet visit to rule out any underlying health problems. A veterinarian may also recommend a behaviourist or dog trainer. The training industry is unregulated, so before allowing anyone access to your dog, do your own [research](#). Your vet may not be aware that a trainer uses shock collars or other aversive methods. Some trainers will hide this. Humane solutions **do not** include cutting vocal cords (cordectomy), anti-bark collars, prong and choke collars, or crates. These options can be dangerous, inhumane, and rife with complications. Citronella spray collars can also be stressful, traumatizing and irritating. Dogs, like children, go through stages of development and learning, so you will find behaviours can present and cease at any time. Being prepared to endure with a patient, kind heart will bring you the most success.

Barking Tip Sheet provided by: www.banshockcollars.ca