



BARKING

NEVER FORGET, BARKING IS NORMAL HEALTHY CANINE BEHAVIOUR!

Barking is communication. It is imperative you listen to the message. If this seems unreasonable to you, it may not be the right time for pet ownership. It takes a great deal of time & energy to adequately care for and allow a dog the freedom to be a dog. 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 does not make for a happy life for dog or owner. When we resort to punishment that is scary & painful there will be undesirable consequences.

Some Reasons for barking

- Lack of socialization
- Lack of adequate exercise
- Need for quality individual attention
- Stress
- Hunger
- Fear
- Attempting to protect family or territory
- Alerting family to others approaching
- Alerting humans to smoke, fire, change in environment, burglars etc.
- Boredom
- Separation Anxiety
- Being excluded from gatherings
- Medical issues
- Excitement or pleasure when seeing other dogs, squirrels
- Breed characteristic
- A learned habit from another dog

Various solutions work to decrease or eliminate barking from simply asking them to go lay down to cookies to a healthy breakfast before leaving them alone. Find the reason for the barking and you find the solution. Acknowledge that you see what he is barking at by standing by him and looking at what he is looking at and let him bark for a minute or two. Then tell him ok that is enough. Praise him for stopping. If separation anxiety is the problem it will often resolve itself with time if you leave your dog comfortable and for reasonable lengths of time. If a dog has never been left alone and now must start, this will cause anxiety. Patience and time alone can solve some cases but if barking persists, the circumstances under which the dog is left may need to be re-examined. Left in crates or tiny spaces, no food or water for extended periods can cause severe stress. Consider changes that leave the dog with room to move freely and for reasonable lengths of time. Dogs must be able to relieve themselves so if left for longer than 3 or 4 hours have someone look in on them and take them for a walk. Many people enlist the help of family and friends. If you can't provide these necessities, owning a dog may not be right for you at this point in time.

Solutions for General Barking

- Seek Professional help

- Remove the motivation by understanding the reason behind the barking
- More individual and play attention and off leash exercise
- Socializing with people and other dogs
- A clear consistent signal you use to communicate you want barking to stop, like a shush or a click and lots of praise when they do obey the command.

Solutions For Barking at Home or Home Alone

- Provide regular breaks so the dog can relieve himself
- Practice leaving your dog alone for short periods building up to hours.
- When home alone arrange for someone to come and visit or walk your dog
- Keep a Radio or TV playing
- Do not crate, instead give adequate space for movement and stretching.
- Don't leave your dog for long periods day after day
- Don't leave your dog hungry or without access to fresh water.
- Provide safe toys
- Sometimes restricting outdoors views help. Yet other times 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 occupy their time.

Solutions for Outside Barking

- Don't tie the dog and leave them vulnerable to outside threats
- Bring your dog inside with you.
- When outside provide plenty of space with comfortable clean dry shelter
- Provide a good breakfast and fresh water
- Toys
- Limit the time you leave them outside and never unprotected in hot or harsh weather.

Solutions for Barking at People and Animals

- Seek Professional help
- Keeping a good distance from the stressor will help relieve the anxiety
- If the barking is wanting to greet, have him sit quietly. Reward with the greet.
- Do not punish, instead try and understand the reason behind the barking.
- Reward & praise when your dog doesn't bark
- Allow off leash free time when appropriate
- Introduce the 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. It is important to incorporate patience, repetition, praise, rewards, desensitization, massage and seek understanding of canine behaviour, signals and language. The fact that you care enough to research the best methods of caring for your pet says you are a good pet owner and will be well rewarded with one of the best friends you will ever have.

If the problem isn't easily remedied, a medical check up may be necessary. If a medical exam offers no answer, you may be referred to an animal behaviourist or a trainer. Only engage a trainer who uses positive reward based methods. The training industry is unregulated so do your homework. 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 to dogs and the smell highly irritating. If after careful consideration you insist on trying a spray collar consider using only plain water. Dogs, like children, go through stages of development and learning. Behaviours often evolve and diminish naturally. Keeping in mind that your pet feels fear, stress and pain, just like you, will go a long way towards achieving success.