

Barking

Barking can be the result of your dog being pre-genetically disposed to barking, like hounds. If you have a breed that's known to bark, then working on the "quiet" command and providing toys and outlets for their energy should help.

Anxiety-related barking, especially if it is a new behavior, may be the result of a medical issue, so you should take your dog to the vet. If the vet doesn't find anything medically wrong, you need to determine when your dog barks, for how long your dog barks, and what is causing them to bark. If your dog barks when you're not at home, you can ask your neighbors, try driving/walking around the block while watching and listening, or set up a camera when you leave. By observing your dog, you can hopefully discover the cause to your dog's barking.

Social Isolation / Attention Seeking / Separation Anxiety

Your dog may be barking because of boredom or loneliness if:

- 1 They are left alone for long periods of time without interaction.
- 2 Their environment is barren without playmates or toys.
- 3 You have a puppy or young dog under 3 years of age and they don't have other outlets for their energy.
- 4 You have a particularly active dog (like herding or sporting breeds) who need a "job" to be satisfied.

Recommendations:

Walk your dog daily. Teach your dog new commands or to play fetch, and practice with them every day for 5 - 10 minutes. Provide toys to keep your dog busy when you aren't home. Rotating the toys helps to keep them interesting. Keep your dog inside when you can't supervise them. Take your dog with you to work sometimes, if possible. If your dog barks for attention, make sure you are spending enough time with them. Doggie daycare or having a friend/neighbor visit your dog can be good if you work long hours. Ignore your dog until they stop barking for at least three seconds and then reward them.



Fears and Phobias

Your dog may be barking out of fear if:

- 1 The barking happens when there are loud noises, such as thunderstorms or firecrackers.
- 2 Your dog's posture indicates fear – ears back or tail held low.

Recommendations:

Identify the source of your dog's fear and desensitize them to it. You can also try muting the noise from outside by leaving your dog in a basement or windowless bathroom and leaving a fan, television, or radio on. Close curtains or doors to avoid your dog seeing something that frightens them, too.

What Not to Do

Bark collars are not recommended, especially electric shock collars. These specially designed collars deliver an aversive to your dog when they bark. However, if your dog barks due to anxiety or fear, this collar will not solve the problem, but make it worse. These collars do not address the cause of your dog's barking, so your dog may become destructive or aggressive since they feel they can no longer bark.

