

# Barking - Understanding Your Dog's Language

Dogs communicate with us and other dogs in a variety of different ways, and one of these methods is in the form of barking. Humans all have their own unique voice, and the tone in our voices will change depending on how we are feeling at that moment. This is the same for dogs. They all have a sound that is unique to them, and the tone that they use depends highly on their emotional state and the motivation behind their behaviour. Some dogs bark for the sheer enjoyment of it (as barking can be a very self rewarding behaviour), whereas others will bark through anxiety or fear. Understanding the root cause of your dogs barking is paramount when you are trying to prevent it.

Dogs bark for many reasons:

-  Frustration
-  Stress
-  Anxiety (when left alone)
-  As a warning
-  Boredom
-  Seeking attention
-  For fun (self rewarding)

Living with a dog that consistently barks can be highly stressful for the owner and may also start to upset neighbours around you. This can lead to your dog being reported to the council for a noise disturbance.

## How Do I Stop My Dog Barking?

In order to be able to stop or reduce the behaviour, you must first determine the cause of your dog's barking. If your dog is barking due to anxiety or stress then you must first tackle this problem before you will be able to reduce the barking.

Once you have determined the cause of your dogs barking then you can begin to introduce things to help prevent it.

If you have determined that your dog is barking due to excitement or attention then the best thing to do is to ignore them, turn away and carry on with what you were doing. By doing this you are removing the one thing that they want, which is your attention. If you believe that the barking is due to another reason, then it would be advisable to seek professional help.

## Things to Avoid:

Do not shout at your dog to be quiet as this will only encourage your dog to bark more. Anything where the dog gets a response will reward them for their behaviour. In your dog's eyes, you shouting at them is actually you joining in their conversation, so the best thing to do is ignore them.

There are a variety of different aids available on the market, such as anti bark collars, ultrasonic devices and sprays that state they will stop your dog barking, but they do not solve the cause of the dogs barking. For example, if you was suffering with consistent head aches due to poor eye sight, then no matter how many pain killers you took it would not resolve the issue that you needed glasses. Painkillers in this instance would be a temporary solution, and not a cure to the problem, just like the items available on the market are only temporary. Determine what is causing the behaviour and then begin steps to help prevent it from occurring. If you are unsure what is causing the behaviour then give us a call for a chat.

## When Is Barking Useful?

Just a note to say that not all barking is seen as a negative. There are a variety of different services that encourage the dog's natural ability to bark and it is put to good use by the police force, armed forces and security guards to name a few. These services use trained dogs to patrol areas and bark to communicate of any dangers or trespassers. In this instance the dogs bark is highly effective.

## Fancy a Chat?

**Us too! If you have any questions or would like some assistance with your dogs barking then give us a call on 07538 032 508 or 07432 153 674. We are always here to help!**