



Barking

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We have spent hundreds of years breeding dogs to specifically bark for many reasons, so we need to help them learn a better way to get our attention.

The bark of a **distressed** dog, such as a dog who suffers from separation distress or anxiety, is high-pitched and repetitive; getting higher in pitch as the dog becomes more upset.

Boredom barking tends to be more of a repetitive monotone.

Alert bark is likely to be a sharp, staccato sound; alarm barking adds a note of intensity to the alert.

Demand barks are sharp and persistent, and directed at the human who could potentially provide whatever the dog demands. At least the dog thinks so.

Suspicious barks are typically low in tone, and slow, while fearful barking is often low but faster.

Play barking just sounds . . . playful. If you have any doubt – look to see what the dog is doing. If they are playing, it is probably play barking.

It is important to identify the type of barking so that the treatment can be directed to the root cause.

We recommend acknowledging the barking and responding appropriately to the dog. For example, if they are uncomfortable with the situation, remove them or the trigger (when possible) from the situation.



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Teaching the dog a word or cue such as “**enough**” lets the dog know that you have heard them, acknowledged what they have said and asked them to finish.

Barking is the normal way for the dog to communicate with other dogs and to you. Establish why the dog barks. What are the dog’s triggers? E.g., the postal worker, the doorbell, kids on skateboards.

Keep training short with each new cue practiced only 3 to 4 times.

Training

- Set up training opportunities across a one-week period. Train on a day when you can allow for breaks in the training and to ensure you can freely capture the behaviour at the right moment.
- Begin by pairing the word “enough” with food as reinforcement. Do this in a quiet area that will not trigger barking. This will allow the dog to make a direct link between you saying “enough” and them receiving reinforcement.
- Start by saying the word “enough” and immediately provide the reinforcement. This link can occur quite quickly.
- Once you feel the dog has made a link move on to adding in your marker (“yes”). To begin you will need to be close to the dog so that you can mark and reinforce promptly.
- When the dog woofs, at about the third woof say “**enough**” and when they **STOP** mark “yes” and reinforce. It is important that saying “**enough**” interrupts the barking. This will happen if the dog has paired the word with receiving high value reinforcement, the environment is not too distracting, and they have not become too aroused by the trigger.
- Don't forget to let the dog make their own choice to stop barking and reinforce appropriately.



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Noise desensitisation

- For very noise sensitive dogs please start with neutral sounds that do not currently trigger the dog. Follow the same guide as below.
- Record the sound of the triggers. Play these at low volumes – even from another room, mark and reinforce the dog for remaining calm. If they react, turn the volume down or move it further away.
- Play the sound of the trigger to the dog at extremely low levels in the background while they are relaxed and happy. You can ask for some basic easy behaviours during this practise.
- Only play the noises when in a neutral environment when the dog is relaxed. They need to learn that these are background noises and something to ignore.
- When working on knocking sounds dogs cope better being able to see the knocking occurring therefore knock on other surfaces. Floor, table, cupboard door, build up to the front door, mark and reinforce them for not reacting.

Sight desensitisation

- Introduce the trigger at distance and when possible, have the dog off lead so they can choose if they want to interact or not. Mark and reinforce any interaction (even just a look or a sniff), repeat a couple of times and then put the trigger away when the dog is not paying attention to it. Initially the trigger does not move. If they react, move it further away.
- With repetition, decrease the distance keeping the item still, and eventually make the trigger move.
- The dog sets the pace, so do not rush these steps. They are learning that the trigger is not scary.
- For items like bikes, skateboards, fans, vacuums, etc. you must work on noise and sight separately and eventually combine them together.

<https://youtu.be/Q9BsLd6KQgM?si=M2TDypwcxyHF22wh> Vacuum

https://youtu.be/KibIB1oFI_U?si=4WIKYzfcMMMxGbPp excessive barking



Barking

Attention seeking barking (barking at you)

Mark and reinforce EVERY time the dog is **not** barking at you.

Practise reinforcing the quiet behaviours Kiko Pup Emily Larlham - dog barking for attention <https://youtu.be/Ywr58SkTsYM> -

Warn your neighbours and prepare your ears – it will be loud as they have learnt that it has worked.

Instead of “no or ah ah” show the dog empty hands and use the word that means you are finished playing ball, training or you have nothing for the dog. Be consistent with this.

Dog proof the area that the dog will be in so that they don't get things they shouldn't have to get your attention instead of barking. Don't give them eye contact, touch them, or talk to them.

Pre-empt – at times when they normally bark for your attention give them something to occupy them, if they are barking for a toy withhold it until they offer better behaviour. Barking at you during dinner. Roleplay dinner and reinforce them for staying on their bed or mat. Teach them what you would prefer they be doing.

Practise the Sit to say please https://youtu.be/CzA_20WYMQg

Sitting down, elbow on knee, a couple of pieces of food in hand show them the food and quickly close your hand

Leave your hand (palm up) at the dog's nose level but not in their face

Remember they may nudge, paw, bark, whinge, please don't pull your hand away

Use a plastic container or a training pouch if it is uncomfortable and you feel the need to pull your hand back.

No words – it's a waiting game

When they pull back or hesitate, mark and reinforce by giving one piece of food from that closed hand.