

Some whining, usually by puppies, is normal. If a puppy needs something, whining can work to get the mom's attention. By the time humans get the puppy (8 weeks or so), most have learned that whining will work to get them what they need. This can prove valuable for housetraining and most of the time the whining does not get out of hand. However, some adult dogs still continue to whine and not just when there's an obvious need. That's when it starts to become a real problem for some Pet Parents. Some dogs will whine excessively. There could be many reasons for this.

- The dog has learned that whining gets him attention. If you give the dog attention (eye contact, touching, verbal interaction – even negative) when he whines, then the whining is probably being reinforced through attention. If you're sure that all the dog's needs are met (enough exercise, mental stimulation, food, shelter, pain-free, etc), then ignore the dog entirely. After the dog has been quiet for 30 seconds or more, engage the dog in play, training, etc and then give attention.



- The dog is over stimulated. Good things in the environment can easily over stimulate dogs. Other dogs, squirrels, children, smells, etc can overload a dog's senses if he isn't properly socialized. Proper socialization would include exposing the dog to these stimuli at levels he can handle. If he's excited, whining, and cannot follow known commands when he's near these stimuli, then he is too close (physically) to whatever is producing his excitement. You'll need to move farther away (or if it's a sound – reduce the volume) until the dog is able to control himself and respond to cues. Additionally, if the dog is frequently over stimulated (i.e. daily), I would suggest figuring out a way to include some "down time" in his routine. It takes a body a while (a day or two) to "come down" from real excitement. If the dog is consistently exposed to excitement he cannot handle, his body never gets a real rest.

- The dog is anxious. Whining is almost always a sign of some anxiety, whether it's excitement over something good, pent up energy, anxiety about a situation, etc. The solution is: reduce the dog's overall anxiety level. Things that increase anxiety are: punishment, inconsistent rules and routines, and household tension. Having consistent rules and using positive reinforcement techniques can alleviate much anxiety. Chewing is an excellent stress reliever and it keeps his mouth busy! Getting a dog interested in chew toys, like stuffed Kongs, can be beneficial. In addition, making sure the humans are calm and confident can help an insecure dog. Some external measures, like pheromone collars (or in extreme cases medication), can help. Aim to use these things as a training tool and attempt to wean off of them, if possible. Always discuss behavioral problems and medication with a veterinarian.

Whining is a behavior, just like any other, that can be stopped. Addressing the root cause of the whining will help you solve the problem as quickly as possible.

Remember to exercise the dog, provide for his needs, socialize, reduce anxiety through positive reinforcement training and consistency, and not give attention to whining.

