

BARKING

Read Brenda's personal experience . . .

"I have rescue dogs and didn't get the opportunity to start young, so I have had to correct bad habits."

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Barking is as natural to a dog as talking is to us.

Barking and talking are both forms of communication. Dogs seem to bark differently at the approach of friends, strangers, and enemies (sometimes that means anything new).

You may want your dog to bark to warn you of visitors. You can praise him for the barking, and then reassure him all is well. However, he needs to know when enough is enough. Stopping the excess barking **while they are young** is important in order to not let it turn into a big problem.

If your dog continues to bark, ignore him until he stops. Reward the silence and not the barking. You may be rewarding the excess barking without realizing it by petting, looking at, and/or talking to your dog while they are barking. Instead, deny your dog all attention when the barking is becoming too much. It's very important to not reward unwanted behavior with petting, etc.

Say "shh" and put your finger to your mouth. When the barking stops, reward with petting, talking, and/or a treat! He will pick up quickly that silence is more rewarding. It's important to be very consistent with this training!

Types of Barking

Attention Seeking

Territorial

Alert

Anxiety

Playful

Boredom



Giving your dog plenty of exercise, obedience training, good leadership, and socialization means giving your dog the best life he can have.

Brenda's personal experience:

I have rescue dogs and didn't get the opportunity to start young, so I have had to correct bad habits. I did this with a clicker by marking the behavior I liked – returning focus to me and being quiet. I eventually added “shh” with my pointer finger to my mouth.

In the very beginning, I had to block the window with my body and back them away while waiting for any calm behavior. **I rewarded them with treats when they were quiet.** I didn't carry on conversations with my dogs telling them they are so annoying and noisy... to them, that's attention and approval to bark on!

My dog River used to bark excessively when my children got off the bus to alert me that they were home. Now, he will remain lying with his head on my lap. That's improvement!

Zoey has been much better but is still very reactive to the doorbell. I'm in the process of desensitizing her to that sound so she is less reactive. She's very protective, and I'm ok with that. But she is learning that when I say “Thanks, that's enough,” I mean that's enough. **Repetition and consistency are very important!**

Zoey can be so zoned into the “stranger” on our porch that I have to use a recall whistle to get through to her. The whistle snaps her out of the frenzy. When she comes to the whistle she is rewarded with lots of praise and treats. This also helps to decrease the excitement of guest coming into my house: My guest are not allowed to pet or talk to my dogs until they go to their spot and settle. No petting until there is no barking and calmer behavior. My dogs are ignored completely until they are calm.



Start now teaching how many barks is ok so it doesn't turn into a problem.

Some dogs just naturally bark more, and you have to tell them when enough is enough. My Rottweiler rarely barked whereas my Australian Shepherd is very territorial, plus feels the need to bark at all moving animals. This is one of the reasons you should understand what your dog was bred to do. Know your breed!

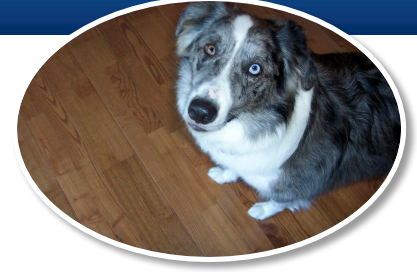
You will learn your dog's different barks from; “It's just the cat again,” to “There's a strange person on my porch!”

Socialization is Important!

The nervousness a dog has from not being socialized can be dangerous!
Many dogs will bite out of fear.

It is very important for your young puppy to be socialized. He needs to be exposed to as many new people, places, and things in a very positive way. When he is used to seeing all kinds of people, places, and things, this will decrease his barking. It won't be scary and threatening to him. Getting him exposed at a young age builds his confidence and you will have a very well-mannered adult dog.

Dogs bark. That's how they communicate. **You have to decide what is ok and what is too much.** You may want your dogs bark to let you know someone is at the house, within reason. But, you may not like it when they bark at the neighbor cat running in its own yard.



TIPS:

1. Understand why your dog is barking. Alerting you? Herding instincts? Bored? Provide activity to replace the excess barking.
2. If you're leaving for a long time, and that's when your puppy barks a lot; give your puppy rigorous exercise so he'll more in likely be relaxed and take a nap. Provide a Kong toy filled with frozen peanut butter/kibble to keep occupied.
3. Start young teaching "Shh" or "It's ok" and rewarding for quiet.
4. Desensitize to sounds that cause extreme barking like the doorbell, knocking etc.
5. Teach a command such as "Go to place" when the doorbell rings and guest arrive.
6. If your puppy continues to bark, ignore him until he stops. Reward the silence and not the barking.

Unintentionally rewarding the excess barking can be done by:

- Petting your dog while they are barking
 - Looking at your dog while carrying on a conversation with him during barking. Example: Stop barking, there is nothing to bark about you silly dog.
 - Letting out of the crate when barking or whining
 - Letting in the house when barking to come in.
 - Playing with your puppy when they are nudging you and barking.
7. Body Block the view that is causing all the barking and move puppy away. No hands – move with your legs.
 8. Socialization – Puppy needs to be exposed to as many new people, places, and things in a positive way. When he is exposed to this at an early age it will decrease barking. Things won't be scary and threatening to him. Socialization builds confidence and you will have a less reactive dog.
 9. Humane collars or spray citronella can be used as a last resort if you are getting kicked out of your apartment for a noisy dog.