



# Barking

What's all the noise about?

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# Barking

## Kinds of barking

Barking generally falls into five categories. To cut down on any kind of barking, give your dog plenty of exercise and arrange for mental stimulation when he is left alone. Feed him using puzzle toys or stuffed Kongs.

Boredom barking happens when a dog is left alone often and doesn't get enough exercise or mental stimulation. Dogs are like kids. If you don't give them something fun to do, they entertain themselves—often in ways we don't appreciate. So, step up the doggie workouts and get out the puzzles. Make training fun and find a balance between the physical and mental stimulation in your dogs' life. Separation anxiety

barking is characterised by constant home-alone barking usually coupled with other behaviours such as house soiling, visible anxiety upon departure and arrival, and destruction around doors and windows. Often, we begin to see the dogs distress beginning even when we pick up our shoes, or keys, well in advance of actual departure. In this case, barking is a symptom of the underlying anxiety, which is what needs to be addressed. **Call** right away if you think your dog suffers from separation anxiety. If the issue is a mild one, I may be able to help you work through it, although moderate to severe separation anxiety should always be treated by a Clinical or Veterinary Behaviourist.

Barrier frustration barking often comes with posturing such as snarling or baring of teeth. The three most common occurrences are: Dogs left in a backyard where other dogs/people pass by the fences, dogs in cars, or dogs on leash that would be perfectly comfortable with whatever they are barking at (most often other dogs) if they were off leash. Barrier frustration barking can be a difficult challenge to manage, alone, so I

would

always recommend getting in touch, if you believe this fits the problem you're having. Not all dogs are happy to be sociable, and THAT IS OKAY. Not all humans like one another either, but dogs have the added complication of being unable to remove themselves from the situation, when they are connected by a lead. That doesn't mean we let our dogs say hi to every dog, or person, they see, but there are techniques to help your dog feel better about being contained by the lead. In the garden, we can teach alternative cues and skills to help the dog understand that they don't need to fear what's on the other side, or behave aggressively towards it but can, instead choose to ignore it, or walk away.



Demand barking occurs in dogs that have learned that barking gets them what they want—balls thrown, doors opened, dinner, or attention. To curb demand barking, stop rewarding the barking (even telling your dog off provides them with attention, so be quiet): Ignore your dog or walk away when he barks. Pick times when he is quiet, offer praise (calmly) and pet or treat him. If your dog barks when you work at the computer or talk on the phone, pre-empt his behaviour. Work on helping him settle in his crate, on his bed, or simply somewhere he can relax, with a toy or stuffed Kong before you sit down to work. Some dogs need a little bit of extra support in learning how to settle down by themselves, and I can help you with that.

Watchdog barking is triggered by sights and sounds such as passersby, slamming car doors, or a cat on the lawn. Watchdog barking is a common challenge for guardian and herding breeds, such as German Shepherds, Rottweilers, Border Collies, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Great Pyrenees, Doberman, and Poodles, as well as toy breeds, although can be seen in almost any breed. Teach your dog to respond to noises by getting a toy or barking once, then coming to find you.

While you train, consider keeping blinds closed (or put up an opaque window covering, like a self-adhesive one) and don't put your dog's bed or his confinement area anywhere near a window or bay door. As with everything else, if in doubt, please get in touch to see how I can help.



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