



Barking

All dogs bark, but some dogs' barking becomes too frequent and becomes a nuisance to others, especially neighbours or may keep you awake at night or frighten people. Dogs bark for many different reasons e.g.

- Excited
- Attention seeking
- Scared
- Frustrated
- Guarding
- Bored
- Separation anxiety

Excited

Common examples of this is when you get his lead out for a walk, when visitors arrive, when you are about to feed him etc. This is often accompanied with general lack of self control type behaviours such as jumping up etc. If your dog behaves in this way it is important to stay calm. Remember you are your dogs pack leader, and need to act calmly. If you shout your dog may misinterpret this as you joining in. When dogs are excitable keep interactions calm, using gentle praise when he is calm and using his self control. Make sure he is receiving the correct amount of physical and mental stimulation, throughout the day, so that both his body and mind are well exercised and calmer. If you would like some ideas on how to provide mental stimulation let us know. Teach your dog an alternative behaviour as dogs understand this better than just stopping the behaviour. A good alternative would be to teach your dog to retrieve a toy, as this makes barking more difficult.

Attention Seeking

It often seems that your dog is barking for no reason, and then stops as soon as you look or speak to him. He may bark at times when he feels he is being ignored e.g. when you're watching television, or on the 'phone etc. Your dog will need to learn there are times when he cannot have your attention. At times during the day make sure that you give your dog plenty of attention so that he receives the social contact from you that pack animals need and remains secure. You will need to reverse your behaviour so that your dogs' barking no longer gets your attention. Be patient it will take a while for both yourself and your dog to change these habits! Some dogs would rather have negative attention than no attention, so prefer to be corrected than be ignored, so it is important to act as if you cannot hear your dog at all.

Scared

Dogs often bark when they are frightened e.g. of strangers, dogs, loud noises, etc. Typically you will notice your dog's body language also changes, the ears will be pinned back, tail between the legs or low, and he will try to move away from whatever is frightening him. This bark (or growling) is a warning and is a way of your dog letting you know that they are frightened. It must not be ignored as often the next method or making the frightening thing move away is a bite. As much as possible allow your dog to avoid the frightening thing but ignore any fearful response from him and praise him when he calms. If you need help socialising your dog with something that he is frightened of please ask Jennie for advice.

Frustration

Some dogs bark when they become frustrated e.g. when trying to reach something, e.g. a cat in the garden, a toy or food etc. Try to avoid your dog seeing things he can't have e.g. put food in cupboards, close the curtains when you go out, put the television on when you leave him so he can't hear a neighbour's dog etc. Do regular training and play sessions with your dog so that he focuses more on you rather than distractions. If he is barking in the garden do not let him have long periods out there, and play games with him in the garden to distract him and focus his attention on you.

Guarding

Your dog may be trying to protect himself and his human pack. This is particularly common in some guarding breeds. If this is accompanied by aggression please speak to Jennie for more advice. Often dogs quieten once the front door is opened and they see that the visitor is not a threat. Unwanted guarding behaviour is often worse when your dog is hungry therefore if this is a problem increase your adult dog's meals to twice a day. Teach your dog an alternative behaviour e.g. sitting on a mat; ask Jennie for advice on how to teach this.

Bored

Some dogs bark if they become bored and this is often accompanied by destructive behaviour. Make sure that your dog receives lots of physical and mental stimulation, and lots of walks. If your dog has to be left for a long period of time try to arrange a dog walker or sitter.

Separation Anxiety

See the separation anxiety advice sheet (ask us).