

Dog Barking

Barking comes naturally to dogs, but the constant barking or whining of a dog can be disturbing or annoying for the neighbours. Often the problem occurs when the dog's owner is out of the house and so the owner doesn't know until someone complains.

In law, a barking dog can be a noise nuisance. The owner can be taken to court if he does nothing to stop the nuisance. This leaflet suggests some simple things you, as a dog owner can try.



Why dogs bark

Dogs are not by nature solitary animals. They need the security of a family group. Pet dogs regard their owners as a substitute family and can soon become distressed when left alone. There are many reasons why your dog may bark:

- Loneliness
- Boredom or frustration
- Attention seeking
- Defending his territory
- Medical problems

The importance of training

Training is important so that your dog does not bark at just anything that moves. A well-trained dog should be able to tell between people allowed into the house and people who are intruders. Good training combined with affection and companionship should mean that your dog will not develop bad habits. Start young and start as you mean to go on.

Some simple things to try

Some dogs just don't want you to go out. Get your dog used to the idea that you are away for different periods of time at different times of the day. That way he might not be so concerned each time you leave. And don't make a fuss of your dog when you leave him.

Try putting your dog on his own in another room - at first for a few minutes, then gradually build up the time you leave your dog alone. Do not return to your dog until he is quiet for a period. When you return, praise him.

Some dogs will bark because they want to join in what's going on outside. If this is the problem, try leaving your dog so that he cannot see outside.

Some dogs will settle only if they hear a human voice. Leaving a radio on at low volume might help. But make sure the radio is not too loud. You don't want to have complaints about that.

Try not to leave your dog for long periods. If you have to, see if there is someone who can look in during the time. Maybe that person could take your dog for a walk or let him out into the garden, if you have one.

Some other points

If you do keep your dog outside, think carefully about where you put his kennel and where he can run. Try not to put it near your neighbour's fence or where your dog will be tempted to bark.

Don't blame the dog and think that you will solve everything by replacing him with another. You probably won't, unless you change your lifestyle at the same time.

Getting a second dog for company might help. But think about this carefully. Do you have the space and can you afford a second dog? Another dog could result in more problems.

If nothing you've tried works

Old dogs can be taught new tricks. Ask one of our dog wardens for more suggestions.

You should also go to your vet. Sometimes a dog will bark because he is ill - anxiety is often the cause for barking. You can ask your vet to refer your dog to an animal behaviourist who is an expert and can suggest ways to improve your dog's behaviour.

Further information

There are many publications on animal training and behaviour. The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC) can provide a list of current publications. APBC are at 257 Royal College Street, London, NW1.

And remember

Be a responsible dog owner at all times. Make sure your dog is well cared for and well trained. In particular, train your dog not to foul in public places - if he does, "scoop the poop" and make sure you bag it and bin it. And do make sure he has a collar and identification tag - it's the law when he's in a public place.

This text is taken from the government leaflet "Constant barking can be avoided".