

THE DOG DEN, LLC

Dog Daycare • Training • Behavior • Events

Barking!

There are many different reasons why dogs bark. “Hey! There’s a dog outside, don’t you see it!?” “Hey! There’s a leaf blowing in the wind!” “Hey! Give me that tennis ball!” Since there are different reasons why dogs bark, there are also different ways to stop or prevent it.

If your dog is barking at you, he is probably doing it for attention (give me that treat, pet me, feed me, etc.). The simplest way to stop your dog from “demand” barking is to simply ignore him. It is the most effective way, but also the hardest way for us humans! When our dogs bark, we want to immediately bark back – Quiet! Enough! No Bark! However, when we bark back at our dogs, we are giving them attention. Even though it is negative attention, it is still attention. Ignoring them when they bark will help stop or reduce the barking. Turn your head away. You’re your arms. Look up towards the ceiling. Don’t say a word. When your dog has been quiet for a moment, look back down at him and calmly praise him. If he continues to bark keep your arms folded, head up and just walk away. Ignore him for a minute or two. Depriving our dogs of our attention is sometimes the worst punishment!

When your dog is barking at something other than you (a dog outside, someone at the door, barking because he’s bored), there are other things we can do. I have 3 black Labs and I personally like it when they bark at something strange outside or someone at the door. However, when I have told them “Enough,” that means that their job is over and they can stop barking. It didn’t happen overnight though! When your dog is barking at something outside, it is difficult to simply tell them to stop barking. They will think, okay, but that squirrel is still out there! Give them your command (Enough, Quiet, etc.) and then immediately show them something else to do. Redirect their behavior to something that is appropriate.

When your dog barks at something out the window, tell him “Enough” and then call or lure him away from what he is barking at. You can use a treat or favorite toy to lure your dog. Go all the way up to him, show him the treat, and guide him away from what he’s barking at. Encourage your dog while you are luring him away “This way, good boy, good dog”. Once he is focused on you, ask him for a simple “sit” and then give him the treat. This way your dog understands he gets rewarded for coming to you and sitting. We don’t want our dogs to think they bark at the window and then get a treat. That is where the “sit” comes in to play. It’s quick and simple and shows your dog he is getting rewarded for doing something you asked him to do. If you call your dog away from the window when you are across the room this may not work. Example – your dog barks out the window, you call him from across the room, he doesn’t come. Your dog has just learned that when you call him he doesn’t need to come! But, if you go all the way up to your dog and call him once you are right next to him, you are also establishing a reliable recall and a dog that listens to you the first time you ask him to do something! By conditioning your dog to come to you (luring him towards you, away from the window) when he sees something outside gradually you will have a dog that gives an alert bark, waits for your command and then comes to you and sits. Nice dog!

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