

Barking

Request Barking

This bark is your dog's way of saying "I want".

- Decide if ***you want*** him to ask this way. If you want him to bark as a way of asking to come in from the yard, reward him for barking by opening the door.
- If ***you do not want*** him to bark at you during dinner as a way of asking for food, then ***do not reward that behavior*** with table scraps; **ignore the request or consequence it with a swift, non emotional time-out.**
- Make sure that your dog gets praise, attention or other rewards for being quiet; otherwise he may learn that barking is the only way to get the things he wants.

Spook Barking

This bark is your dog's way of saying "I'm not too sure about you so back off!"

- We socialize puppies extensively to minimize this type of barking.
- If your dog is spook barking then you need to ***identify exactly*** what it is that spooks him, and ***very gradually*** get him used to the spooky thing(s).
- This can be accomplished by exposing him to much less intense versions of the spooky thing, followed by his favorite games and treats.
- For example, if your dog spook barks at busses
 - The first step will be to feed him supper next to a parked bus,
 - Then play tug and toss him treats when he sees a moving bus from a distance
 - Finally offer him his favorite snacks and lots of encouragement as busses pass close by him.
 - **If he gets scared along the way, you need to go back to an earlier step in your training.**

Boredom Barking

Barking is one of the things dogs will do if bored or lonely.

- Make sure your dog is well exercised, gets plenty of attention, regular mental stimulation (training exercises and games) and has plenty of safe and tasty stuffed chew toys when left alone.
- Barking when alone can be a sign of separation anxiety. If you think your dog suffers from separation anxiety, consult a qualified trainer, behaviorist, or your veterinarian. Overcoming separation anxiety often requires a combination of special training and medication.

Alarm Barking

This is how your dog announces the presence of an intruder.

- An alarm bark lets the household know that there is an intruder present, and lets the intruder know that they have been noticed.
- This is the bark that even friendly dogs let out when the doorbell rings, or if a stranger runs through the yard.
- This barking is normal, but can be annoying if it is excessive.

To reduce excessive alarm barking teach your dog the commands “Bark” and “Quiet” using the following training sequence:

1. Say “Bark” and then give a hand signal (like the way you would make a puppet talk).
2. Have a helper ring the doorbell.
3. Wait for your dog to bark.
4. Praise your dog for barking (he will look quite surprised!).
5. Say “Quiet” or “Shush” and then give a hand signal (finger over your lips).
6. Show him a treat.
7. Wait until he has been quiet for 5 seconds – let him sniff the treat, if needed, to get him to be quiet (dogs cannot sniff and bark at the same time).
8. Let him eat the treat.
9. Repeat, eventually extending the Quiet to at least 2 minutes.

How will you know when he has learned the commands for Bark and Quiet?

- He knows the command **“Bark”** when he barks on command before your helper rings the doorbell.
- He knows the command **“Quiet”** when he stops barking on command without the help of a treat.
- Once he knows the commands you will only give him a treat as a reward, **after at least 2 minutes of Quiet.**
- If he barks before two minutes have passed then say “Ah-ah” and start the clock over.
- Once Bark and Quiet are reliable in practice settings, you can start using Quiet in real life settings.
- **Be prepared to help coach him with a treat under his nose for the first few “real situations” because it is harder for him to be quiet after *he* decides to bark than after *you* ask him to bark!**
- If it seems like too many things set off his alarm too easily, then he may need more exercise, or more exposure to the sorts of things that are setting off his alarm.