



Bossy Barking

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Demand barking is when your dog barks at you or someone else when they want something. If your dog has trained you to respond to his barking demands it may be time that you train him there are nicer - and quieter - ways to ask for things that he wants.

The easiest way to get rid of demand barking is to not acknowledge it. This may mean that you have to put up with a little, sometimes a lot, of barking before the behavior goes away. Don't look at or talk to your dog when they are barking, you can even get up and leave the room when your dog starts to bark at you. If your dog thinks that barking gets him the things that he wants it is time to teach him the exact opposite - barking gets you nothing, or barking makes me leave. As soon as your dog is quiet you can give him the attention that he wants but if he starts barking again go right back to ignoring him.

Avoid yelling at your dog when he is barking since your dog will most likely think "Hey, now you are barking too! We are barking together!" and he will keep barking. You can instead use a positive interrupter to stop the barking momentarily to allow you to praise your dog or give him the things that he wants when he is quiet.

Some dogs may bark more due to their breed type. If you live with a dog that has a strong disposition for barking, keeping him quiet may be more difficult. Some hounds such as beagles, bloodhounds, coonhounds, and foxhounds have been bred to bark as an announcement when they find a scent. Herding breeds are another group of dogs that were bred to use their bark to keep livestock in line. Small breed dogs often bark more since it is their duty to alert their warm laps to passing noises and intruders. Dogs that spend large amounts of time outside may also learn to bark more excessively at things that pass their yard since they may become frustrated at not being able to gain access to smell it and interact with it. Dogs recently rescued from shelters may bark more for a little while since they have been exposed to barking at sights and sounds during their time staying in a shelter.

For each dog it is important to understand the motivation behind the bossy barking. If your dog barks for your attention or his dinner then simply withholding until he is quiet will teach him that he gets things faster the faster he stops barking. If you are living with a breed that is more likely to use barking as a way of communication, the path to monk like silence may be more difficult for him. The easiest ways to keep your dog from barking as often is to make sure that they keep their mouths busy with lots of toys and chews or by getting him plenty of exercise so he spends more time at home sleeping.

For behavior and training advice, please contact Operation Kindness at behavior@operationkindness.org or visit www.operationkindness.org/training.