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Incessant Dog Barking

By **Tim Henry**

Dogs bark for a number of reasons. Sometimes these can be good reasons such as to warn of an intruder or to express fright or pain. Sometimes these can be "bad" reasons as far as humans are concerned - attempts to sound menacing or simply to get attention fall into this category. Whatever the reason for a dog's barking, it can often be considered a nuisance by the dog's owners and their neighbors alike. Because of this there are several methods employed to control a barking dog.

Training

By far the best method of controlling incessant barking is to train the dog not to bark or, more specifically, to bark only at the appropriate times. There are several ways to accomplish this, but dog trainers usually agree that traditional reward and reprimand systems are the most effective and the kindest to use.

Some people opt for an electronic "bark collar" as a shortcut to training the dog themselves. The collar contains an electronic device which is activated by the action of the dog barking. The device issues a small electric shock which pains and startles the dog. Eventually the dog is able to associate the negative stimulus with the barking and stops doing it.

The problems with these systems are multiple, however. Some dogs simply don't learn that the barking is the cause of the negative stimulus, and continue to bark despite the discomfort it causes. Particularly hairy dogs may not even feel the shock or activate the device because its metal points must contact the skin directly in order to deliver the shock. Also, the collar itself is not enough and must be backed up with training anyway. It is a bad idea to use the collars for an extended period of time.

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Some owners find the concept of delivering an electric shock to the dog to be "cruel." While that may be a matter of personal opinion, the collars are proven to provide only minor discomfort for a short time and will not actually harm the dog. Another type of collar that operates on the same principle delivers a mist of citronella in front of the dog's nose. Dogs hate the smell and soon realize that it is caused by the barking. Success rates for citronella collars are comparable to those of the electronic variety.

Surgery

By far the most extreme method of controlling a dog's barking is to have it undergo debarking surgery. In this procedure a small fold of tissue is removed from the larynx of the dog, rendering it unable to bark. Some find this procedure to be inhumane and, since the dog's bark may return after a few months anyway, it is certainly a less than perfect method which few vets will recommend.

This article provided courtesy of

<http://www.dog-health-guide.net>

Don't Let Barking Drive You Mad

By Steve Dolan

You love your dog - but he barks – a lot! It can be really annoying to you and your neighbors if it becomes incessant barking. So what can you do to control or reduce your dog's barking and make him the most loved dog on the block?

First off there are the traditional methods. Dog training and dog obedience schools help train the dog and also teach you how to handle your pet too, so that you can grow a lasting bond with your dog. Of course if you take your dog out and give him lots of exercise he'll be a lot less inclined to bark. A tired dog has less energy to bark and a tired sleeping dog can't bark at all!

Sometimes barking is good, it's your dog's main way of communicating with you. He may have heard or smelled something and wants to let you know. Just acknowledging him may well stop the barking, he knows you've heard and understood. If your dog continues to bark, try a NO, or Quiet command. When he stops barking reward him so that following your commands becomes pleasurable to him.

Giving your dog something to chew on is also a good deterrent to barking. How many dogs have you heard barking with their mouths full? All your dog's attention is now on the new squeaky toy you gave him!!

If the traditional methods don't seem to be working it may be time to try a barking control collar. Many of these work by using sound so that the desired behavior, (in this case stopping barking), can be associated with the sound. Some of the more sophisticated, and of course expensive, models also use electric shocks to deter the dog from barking.

There are two types of bark detection used in Bark control collars. The sound collar uses the noise of

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your dogs bark to activate and the vibration collar uses the vibrations from your dog's throat. Neither type is perfect. The sound type can be set off with sharp loud external sounds and the vibration type from violent motion such as your dog drying himself. There are collars that combine the two methods and these help reduce the false readings.

Whichever method you use, barking can be brought under control in a reasonably short space of time, so persevere and enjoy your dog for years to come.

David Amos is a long time dog owner and dog lover. Find more details at Everything For Your Dog

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