

## Why Are They Barking?

- Attention seeking/demand: Barking in the hopes of getting something, whether it's your attention, resources like food or toys or access to outdoors.
- Territorial/Guarding: Barking when someone or something enters an area that the dog considers his or her own.
- Play barking: Dogs will vocalize when having a good time.
- Alarm: Barking in response to being startled by something, like a sudden unexpected noise.
- Frustration: Barking to signal irritation and powerlessness.
- Boredom: Barking when under-stimulated to entertain or self-soothe. This type of bark sounds repetitive.
- Fear: A type of barking that's often misunderstood. While fear-barking sounds menacing, it's a dog trying to put distance between itself and something frightening.
- Excitement: Meal prep, car rides, or the sight of a leash can trigger this type of joyful bark.
- Separation Distress: Dogs that don't like to be alone engage in a pitiful bark. It is not the same bark made by dogs going through true separation anxiety, as distress is a milder and more manageable form of canine discomfort than true separation anxiety.

These are free techniques to help create a bark free or barking less environment. This information along with much more information on the topic is readily available on the internet and there are trainers and schools everywhere that will help teach obedience to your dog or dogs.



## Gallatin County Animal Control

# Barking Dogs

An informational guide to addressing the problem proactively and keeping the peace with your neighbors.



## Why Do They Bark

Unfortunately, there is no single reason that dogs vocalize, which means that there's no across-the-board quick fix to stop your dog from barking. It can be frustrating to live in a home with (or next to) a dog that barks because it's tough to prevent barking and even tougher to stop it once the barking is underway. The first step to curbing a dedicated barker is discovering the motivation behind the behavior, then addressing the problem with a customized training solution.

### Teaching Your Dog Not To Bark

Once you have established why your dog is barking, you can begin training them not to bark.

#### Block Their View

If your dog is a territorial or an alarm barker, you can block their view from whatever is inciting them to bark. Closing your blinds or curtains can keep your dog from barking at everything they see walking down the street and can stop the barking.

#### Keep Them Busy With Toys

Giving your dog a toy to play with takes their attention off barking and gives them something to do. This is a great way to give them healthy stimulation while you're away.

### Bark on Command

Teaching your dog to bark on command and rewarding with a treat establishes ground rules for barking. By rewarding commanded barks and denying treats for unwarranted barks, you have established barking as a controlled action.

#### Teach Hush

Once you have taught the bark command, you will need to teach the hush command to curb unwanted or needed barking. Tell your dog hush or no bark and if they stop the barking when you command, reward the action. If they do not stop barking, then enforce a humane punishment for disobedience. If there are multiple dogs in the pack, reward the ones who obeyed and not the ones who continued to bark.

#### Get More Exercise

Taking your dog for a walk or visiting a dog park can give your dog a healthy and active life. Exercising your dog on the regular is extremely beneficial and helps create a more relaxed environment.

#### Reward Absence of Barking

Visit areas and things that trigger your dog to bark. Command them to not bark followed by a reward for obedience.

### Establish Leadership

Dogs are pack animals and respond to a chain of command. In the wild, the alpha is the leader. With your dog or dogs, you are the alpha in the chain of command. The alpha decides when the pack eats, sleeps and what rewardable behavior always is. When the alpha is gone, there is a second in command that the pack recognizes and keeps things in place until the alpha returns. This role might fall onto one of your family members or a roommate. Think of it like a child throwing a fit, if you always give into a child's demands then leadership is lost. Decide what needs are justified and which ones are punishable.

## Why Should I Do Anything

You may be accustomed to your dog barking, but that does not mean your neighbors have to be. Training takes time and patience, but it is well worth the effort if it keeps a peaceful neighborhood.

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