

Rangers Department

Barking Dogs

Dogs bark for many reasons including; passing distractions, isolation, anxiety, discomfort and attention seeking.

It is important that you do not reward such behaviour as a constantly barking dog can harm relationships with your neighbours.

Here are some simple tips for controlling a dog's barking.

- ◆ Make sure you do not reward your dog for barking too much. Do not let the dog inside or give it attention when it barks, instead praise it when it is quiet.
 - ◆ If the dog is barking at people or noises on the other side of a fence, move the dog to another part of the yard, or put up a barrier to keep the dog away from that area.
 - ◆ A radio playing softly may help to block any noises the dog is barking at and give the impression that someone is home. Place the radio between the dog and the noise.
 - ◆ If the dog barks at regular disturbances such as children walking to school or the rubbish truck, keep the dog inside or in an enclosed area during these times.
 - ◆ If the dog races along a path or fence barking at passing distractions, put barriers or obstacles in the dog's way to slow it down.
 - ◆ Ensure that the dog has adequate exercise and obedience training.
 - ◆ Make sure that the dog has food, water and shelter from the weather.
 - ◆ If the dog is barking through gaps and cracks in the fence, fill in the gaps.
- ◆ An anti barking collar will be useful for most dogs. They work by responding to the sound of the dogs bark and release a citronella spray direct to the dogs muzzle or by administering a small electric shock to the dog. The dog soon learns the connection between the spray or shock and a bark. Collars are available from most Veterinary Clinics or can be sourced from suppliers.
 - ◆ Teach the dog to stop barking on command. When the dog is barking give a firm command such as 'Cease' or 'Stop' and call the dog to you. Praise the dog when it stops barking. If you have trouble getting the dog to hear you, try making a loud noise.

If these tips do not work for you, please contact your local veterinary clinic or Ranger Services for more information. Ranger Services can be contacted on (08) 9191 0999.



COMMON MYTHS ABOUT BARKING DOGS

MYTH 1

A dog that barks a lot is a good watch dog.

FALSE! Dogs that bark excessively make poor security systems, as neighbours often ignore the barking.

MYTH 2

“My dog does not bark when I am home so it does not bark when I am out”.

FALSE! Many dogs bark because of anxiety and isolation. Most complaints are about dogs that bark when their owners are not at home.

MYTH 3

Sterilisation will stop a dog from barking.

FALSE! Sterilisation does not stop barking except where dogs are barking at neighbouring dogs of the same sex, or when a male dog can sense a bitch in season. However, sterilization is strongly recommended for other reasons.

MYTH 4

It is natural for dogs to bark a lot.

FALSE! Barking is one of the dog's main ways of communicating. However, it is NOT normal for a dog to bark at every noise or passer by, nor to bark for long periods of time.

MYTH 5

Dogs that bark because they are lonely need another dog for company.

FALSE! Getting a second dog does NOT usually prevent or fix a barking problem.

MYTH 6

Dogs only bark too much if they are teased, bored or not exercised.

FALSE! Dogs bark for many reasons including, breeding, inappropriate confinement, passing distractions, isolation, hoarding, anxiety, discomfort and attention seeking. It is important to work out why the dog is barking before the problem can be solved.

SOME SIMPLE TIPS FOR BARKING DOGS

- Make sure you do not reward your dog for barking too much. Don't let the dog inside or give it attention when it barks. Instead, give the dog attention when it is quiet.
- If the dog is barking at people or noises on the other side of the fence, move the dog to another part of the yard, or put up a barrier to keep the dog away from that area.
- A radio playing softly may help to block any noises that the dog is barking at. Place the radio between the dog and the noise.
- If the dog barks at regular disturbances such as children walking to school or rubbish trucks, keep the dog inside or in an enclosed area at these times.
- If the dog races along a path or fence barking at passing distractions, put barriers or obstacles in the dog's way to slow it down.
- Ensure that the dog has adequate exercise and obedience training.
- Make sure that the dog has food, water and shelter from the weather.
- If the dog is barking at gaps and cracks in the fence, fill in the gaps.
- If the dog is barking at people it can see passing by, try blocking the dog's view.
- An anti-barking collar may be useful for some, but not all, barking dogs. Ask your veterinarian for details.
- Teach the dog to stop barking on command. When the dog is barking give a firm command such as “Cease” and call the dog to you. Praise the dog when it stops barking. If you have trouble getting the dog's attention try making a loud noise. If the dog will not listen to you, then your dog will need more obedience training.

DOGS BARK FOR MANY REASONS AND IF THESE SIMPLE TIPS DON'T HELP YOU, SEEK FURTHER ADVICE.

Your veterinarian may be able to help you, or refer you to an animal behaviourist. Your council may also be able to assist, or provide details of the “Barkline” information service.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY AMREX
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
AUSTRALIAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATION