



Absolute Dogs.

SECRETS TO RAISING A PUPPY

The AbsoluteDogs Way

Barking Solutions

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KNOWING **WHY** YOUR PUPPY IS BARKING

Barking is a frustrating behaviour, especially when it is incessant.

For some dogs, they have a natural inclination to bark. There are breeds that are more vocal because they were expected to bark as part of their breeding. In other cases, while the barking isn't desirable, it has somehow remained intact in their genetic code.

For example, a dog bred for guarding or herding livestock or for protecting their home may be more inclined to bark to communicate over a dog bred for providing support to a hunter in the field with quieter, stealthier movement and communication via body language, hand signals and gestures from the hunter.

Barking comes with owning a dog. Every owner will have their own expectation of what type of barking is nuisance barking vs. what type and amount of barking is desirable and/or anticipated as part of dog ownership.

WHY DO DOGS (AND PUPPIES) BARK?

Well, when they're being annoying, sometimes it's easy to think they're barking because they want to irritate us, or perhaps they want to be dominant over us... Other reasons that often come to mind might be that they are being disobedient, stubborn, or giving us a hard time just because they can.

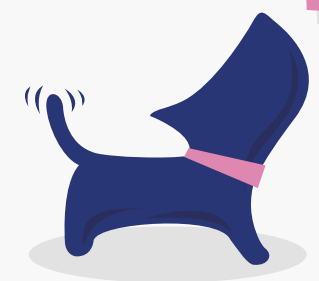
The good news is that none of those are ever true! That's great news, right? Your puppy is never trying to be difficult on purpose and reminding yourself of that frequently as you work together to figure out rules and boundaries will help immensely in seeing from your puppy's perspective. Your puppy is a dog, not a human. As a result, there really is no reasoning or logic in their intention. What it comes down to is that they are communicating in the language they know how to use, and they are doing the best they can.

So, when your puppy barks, it's important to know WHY your puppy is barking... Which brings us to:

THE LANGUAGE OF PUPPIES: TRANSLATING YOUR PUPPY'S BARK

Your puppy is trying to communicate with you. Understanding the WHY behind your puppy's barking can help you to be much more patient and understanding, as well as solution seeking, rather than problem focused. As humans, we love to focus on the problem, but sometimes that can cloud us from seeing easy, effective solutions.

When it comes to our dog's trying to communicate with the



world around them (and that includes with us), they use sounds and body language. This resource is covering the barking portion, but it is important to note that listening to your puppy may require observing what your puppy does and then what follows without your input... It will help you to truly listen to what they are trying to say.

The solution is never to get rid of your puppy's ability to communicate via barking, whining, growling, howling, etc. The solution is to address the reason, the cause, and then to play games that will grow your puppy in a way that reduces the barking while supporting them in the struggle that is causing it.

APPROPRIATE BARKING VS INAPPROPRIATE BARKING

Knowing why your puppy is barking can help guide you to determining what expectations may be realistic for the dog in front of you, as well as what you are comfortable with as you navigate life and its many fun adventures together.

For some, they want their dog to let them know when a delivery person has arrived, or when there may be something suspicious happening outside. Others may prefer their dog is less vocal, especially if their living situation requires them to be aware of how their dog's behaviour and noise level impacts neighbours.

Sometimes, you might think that you like barking and other times you don't like it. For example, if you encourage barking when the delivery guy arrives, your puppy may have a harder time discerning when it is appropriate vs. when it isn't. When it comes to behaviour, it's helpful to be consistent in your

expectations.

The thing about barking is that the more your puppy practices the behaviour it will spread like wildfire. If they rehearse it in one scenario, it will bleed over into other scenarios quite easily as they are ready to select it as a default behaviour vs. if rehearsal was minimised.

There will be dogs that pick up on the context clues of a situation and may bark only at delivery men vs. other visitors or may bark at people visiting your home vs. anyone else out and about. However, it's probably best not to rely on that as it can be difficult to communicate with your dog on when barking is allowed vs. when it isn't. It's easier to simply say that you would prefer they not bark or that you don't mind if they do. Our choice is calm over loud.

YOUR PUPPY, YOUR EXPECTATIONS

In the end, it really is up to you. Barking is a symptom of an emotional response. In any case, when you are looking to curb barking in your puppy's behaviour, it's important to get to the bottom of the cause of the barking. Then, once you have identified the cause, you can work on addressing that through training with games.

The cause will be reduced through the games and that is when the magic happens. As a result of the cause of the barking being addressed, the barking disappears. It's pretty cool stuff. Let's delve into what the different types of barks are and how you can potentially identify them.



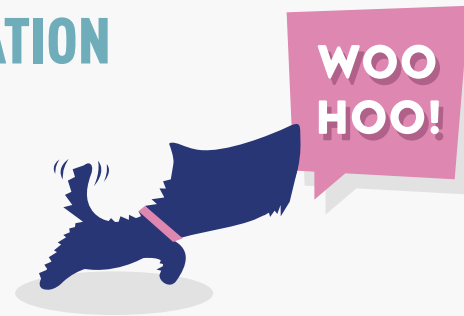
TYPES OF BARKING

There are several different reasons why a puppy (or dog of any age) might bark.

These are:

EXCITEMENT BARKING/FRUSTRATION BARKING

This type of barking is often seen during play. If a puppy anticipates something awesome is about to happen and begins to bark, they may be excited, or frustrated that the event hasn't actually happened yet. This bark is higher frequency. Whining can be involved.



Frustration barking can have some cross over with excitement barking. When playing games if your puppy starts to bark at you and jump toward you, this can indicate that whatever you're doing isn't really clear to them or that what they expect to happen is not happening.

This type of barking can be observed in training, in play, as well as behind a barrier when access to something isn't immediate. This can occur when a puppy that is great with people and other dogs sees them and wants to access them. It's important not to let them access anything when they're behaving in that way.

ANXIOUS BARKING

This type of barking (and sometimes howling) can be observed in puppies with separation related struggles. It can carry on for a while and it's important not to let your puppy rehearse this barking but rather focus on games that encourage calmness, and gradually build up independence.

FEAR-BASED BARKING

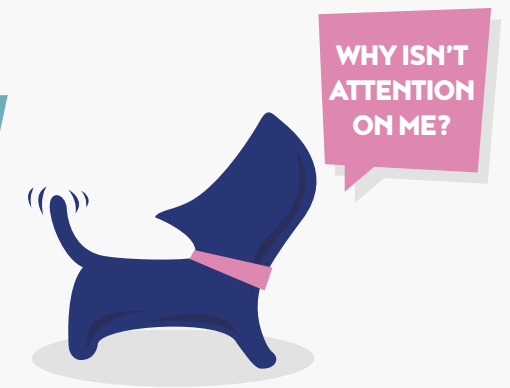
This type of barking sounds similar to frustration barking, except it's deeper and more fearful. The body language that follows may include lunging or trying to move away. When a puppy is scared of something, most will choose to get away from it or to try to "scare it away". If your puppy has displayed any fear behaviour, it's important to work on growing their confidence and optimism.



What's really cool about growing your puppy's optimism and confidence, as well as establishing calm as a default state, is that no matter whether your puppy is fearful or over-excited, you can still work on non-event training (described below) and it will help your puppy.

ATTENTION SEEKING BARKING/ DEMAND BARKING

This can sometimes start as a frustration bark but then dives into attention seeking/demand barking fairly quickly as soon as the initial barking is reinforced. Did you know that you can reinforce barking by telling your puppy to quiet down? Any attention can be perceived as reinforcing to your puppy which can feed the behaviour and actually make it "better" (more likely to occur).



BOREDOM BARKING

This can happen when a puppy is under stimulated and they bark as a result. This can happen when confined, in the garden, etc. This can be barking that is often disjointed, there doesn't appear to be an intention behind it, your puppy may not even be focusing on anything specifically. This is a type of attention seeking behaviour.

HOW DO I REDUCE BARKING WITH MY PUPPY?

NONEVENT TRAINING

No matter where the barking occurs, it is important to identify the triggers that prompt the barking. What in the environment starts the barking?

There are so many scenarios to cover, we can't possibly cover them all here, but here are some examples:

- Other Dogs on Walks
- People on Walks
- Animals/Critters/Livestock
- Bags/Moving Objects
- Inanimate Objects
- Things that have been moved/relocated to a different location than your puppy is accustomed to
- Seeing other dogs or people when in the vehicle
- Seeing other dogs or people on the television
- You, the owner, moving quickly
- Children running or moving quickly

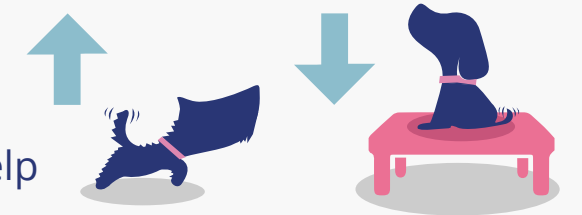
Anything that can be identified as the reason why your puppy might be barking in excitement, frustration or fear can be worked on through non-event training. Without setting out to find these things, and only if they naturally occur, reward your puppy for acknowledging them in the world around them and then move on. No big party, no big fuss. They're no big deal. They are non-events.

In fact, try doing this BEFORE your puppy ever starts barking at anything. This will help prevent the behaviour from ever occurring and your puppy will feel more confident and safer in the environment. This is a no pressure game where direct interaction with whatever it is in the environment is not required. Any distraction can be considered an "event" that can be conditioned through use of yummy food rewards or daily food rations as non-events.

Doing non-event training where nothing really happens to the puppy and they get to see that the world is cool at a distance is a really important foundation layer of training for any puppy.

AROUSAL UP, AROUSAL DOWN GAMES

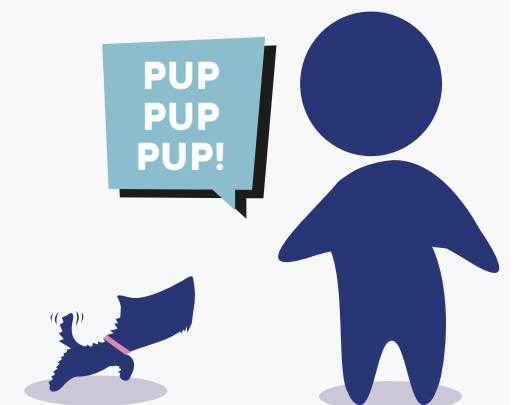
Playing games that encourage your puppy to be excited briefly and then learn to self-regulate by then working on calmness games can help your puppy learn to regulate their emotions. This, in turn, will reduce frustration and excitement barking, as well as fear-based barking and more! The power of games is incredible! Our 25 Day Sexier than a Squirrel Challenge has some great engagement and disengagement games that work on arousal up, and our Boundary Games and Calm courses help to layer in calmness as you work through the 25-day challenge.



ATTENTION NOISE AS AN INTERRUPTER

A great game to play that you should have in your arsenal to interrupt any undesirable behaviour in your puppy is the Attention Noise game.

First, decide what the attention noise is going to be. Choose something that sounds upbeat and fun. Kissy sounds, puppy, or pup pup pup in a sing song voice are a couple of examples.



To play the game, place a piece of your puppy's food at their mouth and then guide them so that they turn away from you to follow the food. Toss the food so that it lands a short distance away, right where they can see it. A short distance for some puppies may be just below their chin vs others where you can toss a little further because they're more coordinated and can track the food.

Once your puppy eats the food, and before they turn back to you (just before!), make your attention sound that you have selected. They should turn their head and orient their body to you.

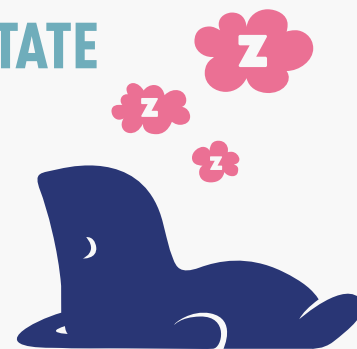
Say "Yes" and reward them for coming back over to you. Cheer them on if they are moving slowly. Woohoo! You did it! That's the Attention Noise game.

You can use this game to interrupt barking and redirect to game that focuses on calmness. This is great for barking that occurs during a training session.

If you are on a walk and your puppy begins barking and you try the attention noise to no avail, this is because you are too close to the distraction that your puppy is barking at. Simply move away quickly and see if your puppy can focus on you further away. For some puppies that may be 10 feet, for others it could be 50. It's all up to the individual puppy and their unique journey.

ENCOURAGING CALM AS A DEFAULT STATE

No matter the struggle, whether it's barking, whether it's biting, or whether it's pulling on lead, and so much more, growing your dog's calmness is generally a great idea! Your puppy can never have too much calmness.

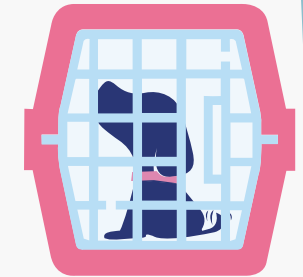


[Calmness is King.](#)

[Calmness worksheet](#)

BARKING IN THE CRATE

If your puppy is barking in their crate, make sure that all of their behavioural wellness needs have been met. Refer back to our Surviving Puppyhood resource.



It can take some time to find the right balance and some barking will happen. There's nothing wrong with it as long as your puppy is not so distressed that they can't settle. For some puppies it's fairly normal to fight being sleepy when put into a crate or ex-pen for a rest. Barking then comes in waves and gradually reduces in intensity over 5-10 minutes.

If your puppy's barking exceeds this, go through some simple steps to ensure that you've addressed as many needs as possible. Very rarely is it that they need to run as that will heighten their arousal. More often it's that they need some mental enrichment to self-soothe, need to toilet, or could use some calm, low energy games to quiet their body and mind.



Toileting



Physical Enrichment



Mental Enrichment



Nutrition + Health

Breathe, Relax, and be as Calm as you'd like your Puppy to Be!

Staying calm helps your puppy so very much.

[Surviving puppyhood resource](#)



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