



Madera County Animal Services

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HINTS FOR EXCESSIVE DOG BARKING PROBLEMS

Eliminating problems is time consuming and sometimes frustrating, but you will succeed in time and you can comfort yourself with the knowledge that you are making your dog a better pet, neighbor and citizen.

PUPPY:

The best time to attack the problem is during puppy hood. Let puppy sound his warning signals for a second or two; then reassure him with a few calming words: "It's all right, Spot." He has done his job and you have responded. He feels he has done his job and you have done yours.

CONTINUES TO BARK FOR NO GOOD REASON:

If he barks for no good reason while you are walking him or during the day, there are various ways to stop him. Scolding is usually enough. Speak directly to him with a commanding "Quiet"! If he still doesn't get the idea, demonstrate by holding his mouth closed (being careful not to cut off his breathing passages) for a moment. Remember that you are teaching, not punishing, so don't further excite him by yelling or hitting him. He will soon learn that silence pleases you and earns him a reward.

BARKS AT ANY LITTLE NOISE:

The dog who barks at any little noise he hears needs extra special attention. This type of barking problem is best resolved by setting up the conditions under which you know he will bark. For example: the arrival of the mailman or other service employee, clanking cars going by, or the neighbor's dog. When he begins to bark tell him firmly "Quiet!", and be ready to enforce the command with correction. Until he knows the meaning of the word and knows that you will enforce it, take a folded magazine or newspaper and smack your own hands (not him) smartly, at the same time giving the command "Quiet!"

BACK YARD DOG:

Too often back yard dogs do a great deal of night time barking or howling. If your dog barks for no apparent reason, place him inside your house or garage to maintain neighborly relations during your absence. You might also consider a "doggie door" that will allow a pet freedom of movement, to protect the house inside and out.

BARKS WHEN NOBODY'S HOME:

Leave a radio playing softly when you go out. Always leave some of the dog's favorite toys in the room for him to play with. Having other playmates like another dog or cat will also help to ease his loneliness. If he barks continuously in your absence and also other problems like inappropriate elimination and destroying items, then he may be suffering from separation anxiety. Please confer with your veterinarian on behavior modification and anti-anxiety medications that will help him to cope with his stress.

THE TIED UP DOG:

If for some reason your dog must be tied up in the yard for hours at a time, make sure he will be as comfortable as possible. Often dogs which are tied up do a great amount of barking. To reduce the probability of his barking, make sure he has sufficient shelter, which he can enter and exit, comfortably. Keep a fresh bowl of water and food nearby. And most important of all, be absolutely positive his rope is not too short or too long. Take the time needed, to be sure that he is not too crowded, causing him to step in his own food, water, and feces. As a result, he will feel like a king in his own home, thus giving him one less reason to bark, howl or cry. Dogs who are tied up for long periods of time will show the effects of such prolonged tying up by developing bizarre, stereotyped movements and they will become aggressive.

Remember that your tone of voice is important, in giving commands. Dogs inherently want to please their owner but first they must understand what it is that you are telling them.

If behavioral modification, changing environment, and satisfying the many needs of your pet have still not resolved the barking problem, you might consider the use of a barking collar. These collars can either send a small amount of electrical current into the dog or spray a citrus fragrant under the dog's nose when it is activated by the mechanical movement of the dog's throat when creating a bark. They can be very effective when used correctly.