

Have Your Dog Spayed Or Neutered To Decrease Territorial Behavior.

Fears and Phobias

Your dog's barking may be a response to something he's afraid of if:

The barking occurs when he's exposed to loud noises such as thunderstorms, firecrackers, or construction noise. Your dog's posture indicates fear; ears back, tail held low.

Recommendations

Identify what's frightening your dog and desensitize him to it. You may need professional help with the desensitization process. Talk to your veterinarian about anti-anxiety medication while you work on behavior modification. During thunderstorms or other frightening times, mute noise from outside by leaving your dog in a comfortable area in a basement or windowless bathroom, and turn on a television, radio, or loud fan. Block your dog's access to outdoor views that might be causing a fear response by closing curtains or doors to certain rooms. Avoid coddling your dog so that he doesn't think that he is being rewarded for his fearful behavior.

Separation Anxiety

Your dog may be barking due to separation anxiety if:

- The barking occurs only when you're gone and starts as soon as, or shortly after, you leave.
- Your dog displays other behaviors that reflect a strong attachment to you, such as following you from room to room, greeting you frantically, or reacting anxiously whenever you prepare to leave.
- Your dog has recently experienced a change in the family's schedule that means he's left alone more often; a move to a new house; the death or loss of a family member or another family pet; or a period at an animal shelter or boarding kennel.

Recommendations

Some cases of separation anxiety can be resolved using counter conditioning and desensitization techniques. Successful treatment for some cases may also require the use of medication prescribed by your veterinarian.

Bark Collars

There are several types of bark collars on the market. We generally don't recommend them, unless used under the supervision and instruction of a qualified obedience instructor. The main drawback of any bark collar is that it doesn't address the underlying cause of the barking. You may be able to eliminate the barking, but symptom substitution may occur and your dog may begin digging or escaping, or become destructive or even aggressive. A bark collar must be used in conjunction with a trainer and behavior modification that addresses the reason for the barking, as outlined above. You should never use a bark collar on your dog if his barking is due to separation anxiety or fears or phobias because punishment always makes fear and anxiety behaviors worse.