

# BARKING – TRAINING QUIET

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## 1. Training the 'quiet' command

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- (a) Training a dog to be quiet on command requires that the dog first be barking. Training will therefore be most successful if you can anticipate a situation when the dog will bark (e.g., children playing, knocking at the door, etc.) so that you can be prepared to quiet the dog on command.
- (b) As soon as you hear even the smallest first woof, say 'quiet,' call the dog to you, ask it to 'sit,' and praise a quiet response.
- (c) If the puppy doesn't listen and barks after you ask it to be quiet, immediately shake a shake can or sound an air horn as you repeat the 'quiet' command. If the volume is correct for the temperament of the pet, it should immediately stop barking and show a slight startle response without acting afraid.
- (d) Another alternative is to leave a head halter and leash attached to the dog. If the dog does not immediately become quiet on command, then a quick pull on the leash and head halter can guide the dog into a quiet sitting position. This is followed by a release of tension on the lead to indicate the correct response has been achieved.

## 2. Encouraging quiet behavior

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- (a) You should observe the dog for a calm, quiet response and provide attention, affection, play, or food to encourage this behavior.
- (b) Barking must not be reinforced with any form of attention, affection, food, or play. Any attention that does not stop the barking may actually serve to reinforce the behavior. If barking cannot be stopped, it should be ignored until the dog is quiet, and then reinforcement can be given.
- (c) Verbal corrections, yelling, punishment, or your own anxious behavior may further aggravate your dog's barking and anxiety.
- (d) Use of a bark-activated device (audible alarm, citronella spray, bark-activated collar) may inhibit barking in some dogs. Once the barking stops, you should then immediately distract the dog with affection or a favored treat or toy so that the quiet behavior can be reinforced and barking is less likely to recur.
- (e) Avoid leaving the puppy outdoors unsupervised for long periods. It may be stimulated to bark by passing stimuli (other dogs, strangers) or may bark to attract your attention. Opening the door or going out to the dog, even to settle the dog down, will only serve to reinforce the barking behavior.

## 3. Anxiety-induced barking

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When barking arises out of anxiety, the treatment program will need to be designed to address the underlying cause of anxiety as well as any factors that might be reinforcing or aggravating the problem.