

How to Stop A Dog Barking At Everything

This ebook has been created as a guide, it is not intended to replace the views or advice of professionals.

You must use this as a guide to understanding you dog's behaviour and also your own.

Please also remember that I'm not an expert dog trainer or behaviourist and I don't pretend to be.

I am a dog owner and lover; I have a great interest in training and giving them the best life I can. I am always researching different ways to help make our dogs and our lives easier and happier.

I have given suggestions and help in this guide that I have tried in the past myself, also methods that have worked for family and friends.

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How to Stop A Dog Barking At Everything

Dogs **love** to bark – it's in their nature and *sometimes* it can be helpful.

But what if it's not? What if it's just plain annoying?? What do you do then? How do you stop your dog barking all of the time?

I've written this guide to help you learn some simple techniques anyone can do, which will enable you to train your dog at home.

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Why Do Dogs Bark?



Barking is a dog's **main way to communicate** with us but also the world around them.

As far as a dog's concerned if they bark to tell the postie to go away and they *do*, the barking worked!

Dogs bark for *loads* of reasons – as a dog parent, **you know this already!!**

They bark to go out, to come in, someone knocked on the door, the wind blew, another dog came by the house, the postman dared to come by the door, a leaf fell, *you're* in *their* seat, they can't get to a toy/food/friend/bed... the list is endless!

Some breeds are well known for **being talkers**... that means they bark or yap or chitter a **lot**. (Yes, some dogs *chitter*.)

Chihuahuas are quite vocal dogs, so are Yorkshire Terriers and even Staffordshire Bull Terriers! (We had a few chitterers.)

So, the **first thing** you need to rule out is whether you have a *vocal breed* or not.

The **next thing** to work out is *why* your dog is barking.

Is there a problem? Do they want you to do something? Or are they just vocal and talking to you??

How often has your dog been in the garden and **started randomly barking**?

Sometimes it's in reply to another dog barking *somewhere else* – it's like a **warning** they pass to one another about some danger they've detected (or imagined).

Sometimes it's *just* **because a pigeon decided to sit on your roof..**

So, **why** do dogs bark and **how** can you *stop* it?

There are a few possible answers that we will go through in the next few chapters!

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Your Dog Barks When There's Someone At The Door



As far as your dog knows, that knocking on the door or ringing of the bell means **danger!**

Someone who **isn't in their family pack** has arrived but *what* do they want?? They are a **potential risk** to the household and so **must** be told to back off and beware 'cos *they* are here to **protect** everyone.

Some dogs will **bark every time** someone walks past the house, or a car pulls onto the drive – our poor food delivery guy gets a right earful of barking when he delivers us food!!!

This can be called '**alarm barking**' because they are *trying* to raise an alarm that there is possible danger outside.

Some dogs are **worse** than others, either because of their breed or their personality or even their past experiences.

They can be *more* of a barker when there is a new baby, an older person or even an ill person at home too.

Any dog that is known as 'good for guarding' can be more of an alarm barker. Think German Shepherds and Rottweilers.

It's actually a **good** thing that your dog is so aware of the outside world and wants to keep you all safe – but it doesn't always *seem* like a good thing.

Sometimes it just **becomes too much** for you, the family and even the neighbours.

If you want to try and **reduce or stop your dog barking** at the door, then read on to **find out how to stop them barking every time the door knocks!**

Just Remember

Please remember that *any* training takes time. Time for *you* to learn and time for *your dog* to learn.

Experts say that it takes an average human (who's average??) **at least seven times of repetition** to even *start* to remember something as a new habit.

So how many times will it take *your dog* to remember a new skill or habit??

Try to give it time, expect to mess up, have some patience and try and **make it fun!!**

Use training time as a **fun time to bond with your dog**, it shouldn't be stressful or bring you to tears! If it does, **stop** whatever you are doing and leave the training for another day – or try another method.

What To Do If Your Dog Barks At The Door

So, we know that when dogs bark at the door, they are 'alarm barking' to warn us of potential danger, but what do we do to stop the excessive, annoying barking?

Like with all dog training, there are *do's* and *don'ts*, below are some suggestions of what you can do.

Ooooh! Squirrel!!!



Distract them.

If they start barking because the door knocks, **try distracting them with something else**. Sounds simple and sometimes it is! Try giving them a toy, or play fetch, you could even send them to bed.

By sending them to bed you are removing them from the trigger area of the door, their bed is also a safe place for them, and it may calm them down.

Fetching or playing with a toy will distract them from the door by giving them **something more exciting** to do. Have you ever seen that cartoon dog get distracted by a squirrel and go running off? It's kind of like that.

You could even **try a few tricks** – if they have learnt any – like sit, rollover etc. It just **disconnects their brain** from being on alert and **relaxing** into something else instead.

At *any point* of your training, if your dog does well by **not** barking, make sure you reward them in some way!

Whether it be praise, hugs, food treats or a special toy, make sure they *know* they have done well!

Then put all of the treats away until they can listen to the knocking without reacting with barking.

Knockknockknockknockknockknockknock

You can also try **desensitising** them to the noise.

Dog trainers use *counter conditioning* or *desensitising methods* to train dogs **not** to do something. It undoes any 'training' already done and any bad habits that *may* have formed by accident.

To try **desensitising your dog at home**, record or download a sound that sets them off barking – so a knocking, doorbell ringing etc.

(If you can't download or record a sound, try getting someone to gently tap the door to begin with.)

Then **make sure the house is fairly quiet** and you aren't expecting anyone to visit – otherwise, they will be distracting the dog and making the noise you are trying to teach your dog to ignore!

Next, just start to play the sound **quietly** in the same room as your dog. And I *mean* start quietly – so you can hardly hear it. (Your dog still will.)

If they bark, just **ignore them**. If they *keep* barking try the distraction techniques.

If they are **quiet and ignore the knocking**, reward them with a treat, a hug or their favourite toy. Give them loads of fuss and then go back to being quiet and watching the tv or reading – keeping the knocking (or other trigger sound) playing in the background.

Once they have got used to the knocking at a certain level and are ignoring it, *turn the volume up* a notch or two. Then repeat the above, **ignore the barking or try distraction**.

(If you are using someone to knock on the door rather than a recording, get them to start knocking a little louder.)

Keep doing this **simple training** and *eventually* get up to the **same volume level** as your actual door knock/doorbell.

If your dog can have the recorded sound of a door knocking without barking, you're ready for the real thing!

Get someone to go outside and knock on the door at a normal level, and see the dog's reaction.

If they **don't bark**, give them **lots of praise** and a treat – whichever reward works better for them.

Remember to *always* fuss your dog and **let them know they have done well** and pleased you – a dog only ever wants three things: food, sleep and it's owners love.

Don't Do This:

Don't bother shouting at them – even though this *might* be our instinctual reaction when dogs start barking their brains out.

To your dog, they are **barking to alert you to danger**, to keep *you* safe. If YOU start shouting too, your dog just thinks you are *joining in* the alarm call and will carry on doing it. The more annoyed you get or louder you shout, the more worked up *they* will get.

In their head, you are the pack leader and if the pack leader has started to alarm bark, then it must mean real danger is coming!

This will just make them bark more, louder and get anxious, may be even more protective.

So, as tempted as you are to just bellow out SHUT UUUUUPPPPPP, **don't**.

Trust me, we've tried it a couple of times. (In our *very* early days of dog ownership.) My in-laws have tried it.

Shouting at your dog won't work and it's just a little bit mean too.

My dad has always had (*mostly* big) dogs, and he has **always** ignored any barking they've done – and had **better results** than anyone I've seen who *screams* at their dog. So that's the path **we** follow.

We try to **be calm, consistent, patient** (as we can be) **and fun!**

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Your Dog Barks At People Going Past your House



This is another form of the **alarm barking** we were talking about earlier.

It's your dog's way of making sure you are aware there is a possible danger – and their way of telling that danger to go away!

Some dogs who bark at passers by do it through fear, boredom and even *anxiety*.

It can be difficult to tell whether your dog is acting from anxiety, as it can manifest in different ways. If you think your dog could benefit from help with anxiety or fear, try contacting your vet and asking for a referral to a dog behaviourist. Your vet will be able to give you some tips and advice to help in the meantime too.

So, if **your dog just sits on the windowsill and barks at everyone**, the *first thing to do* is **block** their view.

I'm not saying sit with the curtains closed all of the time, but if you know there's a certain time people will pass in front of your house, you could pre-empt the barking and close the curtains.

For example, we live by a school and so our dogs know that twice a day there will be a crowd of kids coming past to and from school – our Evie and Peanut have been guilty of barking at the groups of teenagers lingering outside of the house, so we had to try and sort this out before it got worse!

Again, when our dogs are barking when we don't want them to, we **try the distraction techniques**.

Distract them with a toy or game.

Call them to you and praise them if they come.

Send them to their bed and then praise them for doing it.

If the dog is in the front garden and barking at someone passing by, **do the same** distraction techniques.

If your dog stays in the front garden on their own and barks a lot, the best thing is to make sure they are supervised *every time* they are out until they realise they are not allowed to bark.

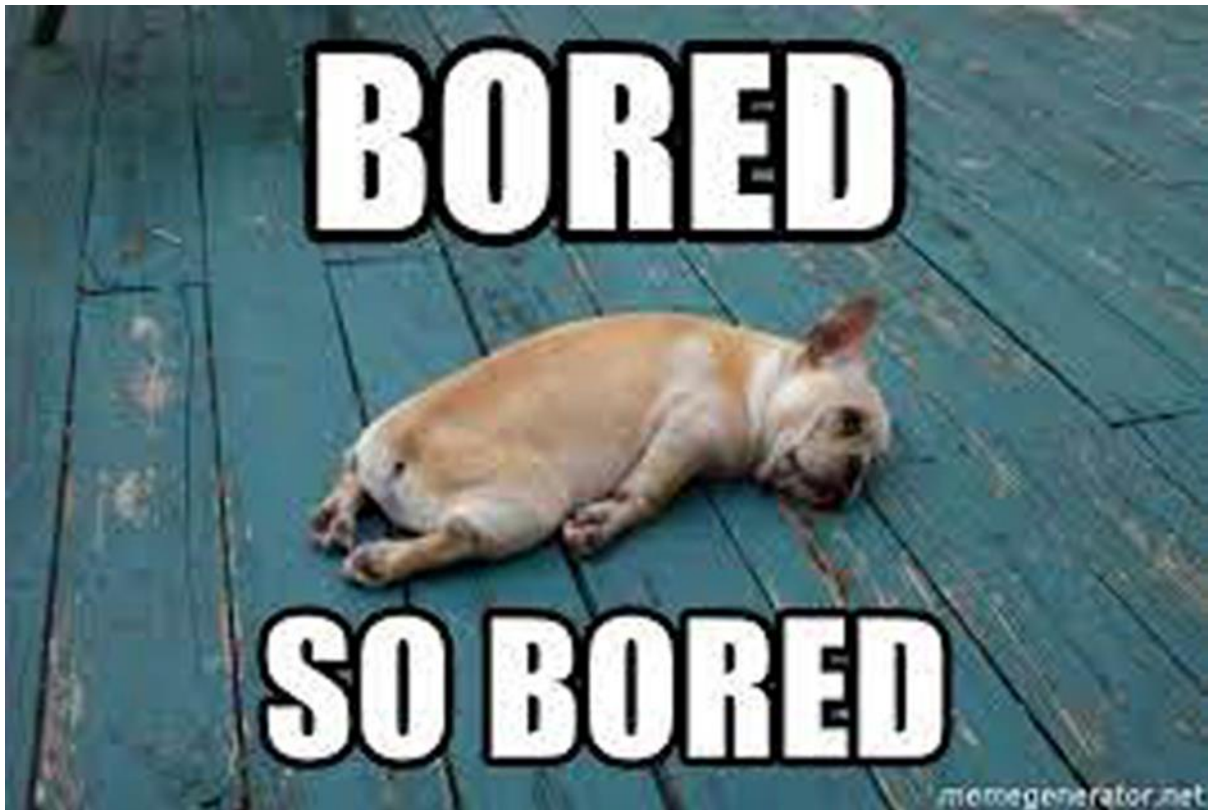
Once you have done them a few times and praised and rewarded your dog for stopping barking, they will react to your distraction quicker and easier. Making life *much* less stressful for you!

Some dogs will even stop barking completely at people passing by or cats in the garden once they have been distracted enough times. **It takes time and patience** to get this training to work – luckily, **it isn't difficult**, they are *simple techniques*, but they work!

Just have patience and perseverance and you *will* get there.

Remember, **don't shout** at your dog, and **never** smack them!

Your Dog Barks When Bored



Sometimes **dogs get bored**, so they bark. It's more known in working dog breeds to have a yap or bark if they aren't *stimulated enough* during the day.

The **smarter** the dog, the *easier* it will get bored!

So, if you think that maybe **your dog is barking because it's bored**, here's a few things you can try!

More exercise – take longer walks, walk more often, or play in the garden.

Provide mental stimulation – play games, try training, agility or hide and seek with food or toys are also popular with dogs!

There are **loads of games** you can try which will tire out your dog, mentally and physically.

You can put a treat under a plastic cup, then add two more cups and see if your dog can find it.

Try showing them a toy or treat and letting them smell it, then hide it somewhere in the room or garden and see if they can find it.

Just doing **normal training** is good exercise and a *boredom buster*.

Start with the basics like sit, stay/wait, bed, and come, then move on to roll over, give paw, play dead, speak etc.

All **dogs love to play games**, it keeps them busy, teaches them something new and lets them spend time bonding with you – their main objective in life!

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How To Stop Your Dog Barking At Cats Or Birds



This is **another example of alert barking** for most dogs, also its part of their *natural instinct* as a hunter.

Most dogs nowadays spend their days watching tv and eating snacks... just look at Instagram or Facebook for evidence of this!

They don't *need* to hunt any more, but **that instinct is still in there** somewhere.

Some dogs are still bred as working and hunting dogs, so their instincts will be much stronger!

Certain breeds such as Jack Russell Terriers – or any terrier – have been bred for hunting over generations and still have that strong instinct embedded in them.

If you have a terrier or a dog that was bred for hunting, it will probably be harder to train them to stop barking at animals in the garden.

So, what can you do if your dog barks at cats or birds in the garden? It's tricky but there are a few ideas you can try.

Just because a dog's natural instincts are telling them to bark at birds and cats, **doesn't** make them a dangerous dog who wants to hurt other animals – it just means they are *warning you* or are even excited about the intruders and want to chase!

As dog owners, we have to try and remember that it's a natural reaction for a dog to chase something small and fluffy and to try and **encourage them** to just look not chase.

I personally think that teaching your dog to stop barking at cats or birds is one of the harder things to do, you don't have control over what comes into your garden or sits on your fence/roof.

Most of the time your dog might be in the garden without you, ours have a separate dog-only area we call the dog run but is just a toilet area. So, if our dogs are in the run, they are unsupervised as it's been made safe for them to be in there alone for short periods of time.

I've tried leaving the dogs the whole garden to run around in over the years and my flowers are not grateful. I'm a keen gardener so I like to try and grow plants rather than have them dug up and eaten!

A big problem of the dogs being unsupervised in the garden is **you can't see** what else comes into the garden. If a cat or bird appears and the dog barks, *then* you know about it – and so do the neighbours. Which can cause trouble sometimes.

Training without you being there in person isn't going to amount to much. So, the best idea is to go out with your dog every time until they realise that barking at cats and birds isn't acceptable.

Being in the garden **every** time your dog is out there isn't always realistic though. We have 6 kids and a houseful of other pets as well as the dogs, plus I work from home so I can't sit in the garden all day with the dogs! (Though I would love to!)

So instead, **start off** by being out there every time and if they bark at a curious cat or dim pigeon, try the **distraction techniques** I gave you before.

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