

## **Barking**

### ***Keeping it under control***

Barking, howling and whining are the sounds that the dog depends on for communication. Your understanding of why he barks when he does will help you in controlling what could become an annoying behavior problem. For example, when separated from the pack, cubs, as well as older pack members, will whine, bark or howl to increase the chances of rejoining the pack. Similarly, a young pup will bark or whine when separated from you at night or when you are away.

### ***Territorial barking***

Another characteristic shared by family dogs and wolves is barking to signal an intrusion into the "territory". In a pack, the leaders are usually the first to sound the alert. This is not an altogether undesirable trait, as many people want to be notified if something unusual is happening on their property. But barking rather than discriminating between the different sounds heard is annoying at the least. It is up to you to help your puppy distinguish disturbances at an early age and gain control over his barking so that you can quiet him on command.

### ***Dominant barking***

Growling and barking also occur between pack members with the higher-ranking animal usually directing the behavior toward the subordinates. If a family dog is to bark or growl at its owner, especially when being disciplined, he will usually begin the habit as a puppy. Because the pup's little barks or growls seem so harmless and cute the habit is often overlooked. Don't believe the old wives tale that "barking dogs never bite". Uncontrolled barking, especially when directed at people, often precedes a biting problem. There are a great many mailmen in this country that can attest to the fallacy of that old saying. If left uncontrolled, the habit could evolve into a genuine problem as the dog gets older.

### ***Control is advisable***

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to teach a dog never to bark. The following guidelines are designed to put your pup's barking under control so that it doesn't become excessive or indiscriminate. And while preventing future problems, you will also be training your dog to bark as a reliable signal of disturbance on your property.

1. Never encourage the pup to bark or "speak" for food. What he'll be learning is to manipulate you, not to alert you.
2. Never encourage the pup to bark as a signal to go outside. You can easily wind up with an excessive barker.
3. If the pup barks due to an outside disturbance, quiet him, then investigate. Don't allow him to continue barking uninterrupted. He's done his job by alerting you, if not checked he could become an indiscriminate, excessive barker.
4. Never allow him to continue to bark at people. 99% of the people he'll meet during his lifetime will not mean any harm to him or you. For the rare occasion when danger threatens, his very presence will be helpful. Unless he's specifically trained and handled by a professional, he cannot be both a reliable guard dog and a family pet as well.

5. To discourage continued barking, raise your voice, and then enforce your command.
6. If you have crate trained him and he begins to bark excessively while you're away, try and determine the cause of the barking. The next time you leave, turn on a tape recorder. If you find that doorbells, outside noises or, the telephone trigger the response, turn on a radio moderately loud to mask any outside noises.
7. If you keep him outside and he begins to bark, determine what causes the response. Make sure he's not barking because of some physical discomfort such as overheating. If children are teasing him, don't leave him outside unattended, as he may learn aggressiveness toward all youngsters.
8. If he's barking at people passing by, either move him to another area, or do not allow him outside unattended. If not controlled he could learn territorial aggressiveness.
9. If he's barking to come inside, assuming he's not kept outside for a prolonged period of time, place him near the door so that you have immediate access to him. Then train him to be quiet using a raised voice and shaker can. Gradually allow him to be further from the door, as he becomes quiet.

In summary, do not encourage your dog to bark either knowingly or through lack of correction. Teach him to be quiet on command. Keep your pups barking under your control and you'll help him grow into a pleasant family pet instead of an annoyance to you and your neighbors.