Dog barking and how to stop it

Well Heeled Dog Club
www.thedogclub.co.uk

Dogs have a natural instinct to guard what they believe is their territory. They consider it their duty to warn other pack members (which includes you and your family) of intruders. Indeed, many people value their dog's ability to warn them of people entering their premises. However, this dog barking can often be excessive and become a nuisance to you and your neighbours. There are two main ways to manage excessive dog barking of this type:



Training your dog to be quiet:

When you see your dog barking excessively at visitors or passers-by, we often find ourselves joining in the mahem in an attempt to discipline them rather than praising quiet behaviour. We are also often inconsistent when we apply this discipline. Consequently, our dogs do not develop any learned behaviour around when and where barking is allowed. Here are a few tips on training your dog to be quiet:

- Each time your dog barks pay attention. If you're at home then go and see what he's bothered about, praise your dog for informing you, then gently ask him or her to be 'QUIET'. If he remains quiet for a few seconds, praise him. You may need to show him a very tasty titbit initially to help him concentrate on you and calm down. Give the titbit the moment he's quiet and slowly increase the amount of time he has to be quiet before rewarding.
- If he continues to bark, raise your voice or use body language to strengthen the command, but praise as soon as he's quiet.
- It will take a few sessions (depending on the number of incidents you get) but build up the duration of time you expect him to be quiet. You might find it useful to count out the seconds as an added means to hold your dog's attention away from passer-by.
- Always be consistent- many attempts to train a dog to be quiet fail through inconsistency.
- NEVER reprimand dog barking. Only reprimand them for disobeying your command to be quiet. But the second they obey, praise them warmly.



Conditioning your dog to see visitors as a pleasurable thing:

In addition to teaching your dog the 'quiet' command, it is always good practice to condition your dog to accept visitors and strangers as a pleasurable experience, thus removing the 'threat' perception that triggers your dog to bark. Fully socialising your dog with as many different types of people as possible should be a priority at an earlier age - if he's still young then sign up for a puppy course; if he's older then desensitise him to strangers by joining a socialisation training class.

If you would like any further help or information, please contact Mike Flannery:
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