

Ty Brown's

THE INSTANT "PROBLEM-BARKING" REMEDY

**GET YOUR DOG TO STOP BARKING
AT NEIGHBORS, GUESTS, AND
DOORBELLS!**



The Instant "Problem-Barking Remedy"
Get Your Dog To Stop Barking at Neighbors, Guests, And Doorbells!

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By Ty Brown

Excessive barking is a behavior that I label, along with other behaviors such as aggression, anxiety, fear, hyperactivity, as a 'chaos behavior'. Hypothetically if you were able to look inside the mind of a dog you would see a buzz of activity. You would see chaos.

One thing that I can guarantee you about dogs is that a high level of chaos means a low level of control.

What does that mean for you, the dog owner? If you want to fix an excessive barking problem one of the first things you need to do is gain a high level of control. Control in dog-speak means obedience. As I have mentioned before, obedience training is the medium by which we communicate with our dog.

So before I get into some of the more specific causes of excessive barking let me run through a few example scenarios where people complain the most about a heavy barker.

"The Doorbell Screamer"

How many of you have dogs that wake the dead when someone has the nerve to knock on your door? I'm willing to bet that a lot of you do.

In order to fix the problem lets go back to what I just got finished saying. The dog, upon hearing the door, is in the throes of chaos. Let's combat that chaos with control.

My go-to move with this behavior is to simply teach the dog to lie down in a bed near the door. Lying down and staying is a very

controlled behavior. Will your dog want to lie down in the bed when he hears the door? Of course not. That is where training comes in. Go back to leash training. Refer to the section on getting your dog to lie down and stay. Teach your dog a CONTROLLED way to greet someone at the door.

Again, the more control you instill the less chaos you will see. Control and chaos are enemies. Allow chaos to reign and you will pull your hair out. Introduce control and you and your dog will be much happier.

I recently worked with a Chihuahua who had an extreme barking problem at the door. His problem was so severe that his barking would lead to attacking any soul brave enough to cross into his home. The first thing I did was teach him to lay in his bed upon hearing the door. We practiced a lot. I would ring the doorbell and as I did the owner would use the leash to get the dog to go to the bed. In the beginning stages the dog didn't want to stay, of course. The owner would dutifully correct the dog back into the bed each time he left without an invitation.

We proceeded down this path for a time and wouldn't you know it the dog became conditioned to a new set of behavior. Previously he was conditioned to going nuts when he heard the door. The owners didn't want it but they were unwittingly allowing it. Now, the owners were taking charge and making sure that the dog performed a desirable behavior. They set themselves up for success by using the leash as a communication tool.

As time went on they no longer needed the leash. The dog had become conditioned to simply go to his bed when he heard the

door. In other words, the doorbell actually BECAME the command to lie down in his bed.

Now that he was lying down in his spot upon hearing the door the barking decreased dramatically because now he was under control. In that state of mind barking couldn't exist.

You can accomplish this as well if you just determine what control exercise you want to instill. I recommend lying in a bed but perhaps you will have your dog lie down anywhere, maybe you will have your dog sit and stay. Whatever you choose just remember that you are always better off replacing an inappropriate behavior with a desired behavior.

"The Sensitive Listener"

I come across a lot of dogs that must have the best hearing ever. The owner doesn't hear a peep but without warning the dog seems to hear something and takes off across the house barking up a storm.

Let's go back to our formula. This is a dog exhibiting a lack of control. I'm sure that in most cases the owner is commanding the dog to come back and stop barking but the dog isn't paying attention to a word.

Think about it. This isn't a barking problem. This is an obedience problem. The dog hasn't been trained to listen to his owner while distracted.

Do you even need to scold the dog for barking like this? I don't think so. What you need to do is replace the barking with a new behavior. Go back and refer to my section on obedience training.

Teach your dog to simply come when called in the face of distraction. Train your dog to lie down and stay even though he'd rather tear off after a noise.

A few years ago I worked with such a sensitive listener. I swear that at times the dog must have been making up noises because no one on earth could have detected what he claimed to be hearing.

In his case I chose to simply have the dog lie down. Upon hearing a noise and wanting to charge off I would quickly command him to lie down and stay. Of course he didn't want to at first so I used leash training to teach him to lie down and stay in the face of distractions. I would use corrections and praise to mold his behavior even though every fiber of his soul screamed for release.

Over time I weaned him off the use of the leash and over time he would have a very predictable behavior. He would hear a noise, let out a single bark, then lie down even before I had a chance to tell him to lie down. I re-conditioned him on how to act around noises.

You can do this too. What will you choose? Will you have your dog lie down or come when called? Whatever you do, use obedience and control to fight the chaos your dog is experiencing.

"The Walking Alarm"

I can probably leave my house right now, walk a few hundred yards in any direction, and likely find a dog being walked and barking his head off at every distraction.

There is something else I can tell you. That dog is not walking properly by his owner's side. Because the dog is allowed to be in a state of un-control in his walk, chaos is what ensues.

The first thing I would have that owner do is go through my 'crazy man' technique that you will read about in other sections of my eBook. This technique requires control and teaches the dog to focus on his owner rather than on every other distraction.

I won't give one example of this method working because the reality is that I have helped literally hundreds of dogs to stop barking on walks with this method. If you follow my instructions you will be amazed at how quickly you will get your dog to stop barking on walks.

To sum it up, fight chaos with control and you will be thrilled at the results.

The following section is going to get into some more specific cases of excessive barking. These methods will complement the idea of Chaos vs. Control and I encourage you to internalize all of this information and experiment with your dog to find out what works best. In order to get your dog to stop barking, it is helpful to identify the cause of your dog's barking. Here are several of the common methods. If your dog barks, please read all of them as there may be crossover.

The territorial dog

Believe it or not this is a type of aggression that I often encourage people not train out of their dog. If your dog's aggression is limited to only barking at people who pass by your house than I almost always believe that this is not a bad thing. There are a few

cases where I would say otherwise, but in general, this is what dogs do and what they were bred for. They were bred to be watchdogs and alert their human caretakers.

Many would even argue that this is not aggression. In most cases I would agree. In most cases a dog who barks at neighbors and people on the street is merely sounding the alarm and not shouting out threats.

What I find to be best for this type of dog is to teach him something to diffuse the barking when it gets too loud or inappropriate. There are two things that I will teach a dog in a case like this.

1) Use the down stay. If your dog is barking too much have him come to your side and tell him to lie down and stay. If you have done a good job with this exercise then this will be enough to stop the barking. He can't be looking out the window barking at people if he is lying down next to your side. You can obviously use other commands to diffuse the situation. You could have him heel by your side for example. You can learn this method in the "Perfect Dog Behavior" book.

2) Teach your dog a 'quiet' command. Have your dog on a long line and training collar around the house. When he goes up to the window to bark at your neighbors merely give him little tugs on the leash as you tell him the command 'quiet'. These tugs don't need to be corrections, per se, just enough of a pull to distract your dog.

As you distract him enough to quiet him you must praise him. Repeat this process as often as needed. It will take awhile to

teach him that quiet means to stop barking but if you persist you will find that he learns what the command means.

Separation Anxiety

I get more questions from dog owners and more requests for dog training due to what owners and veterinarians call separation anxiety than any other misbehavior or disorder. Most of the time, however, owners and veterinarians are wrong.

Let me start out by defining what separation anxiety is:

The definition of separation anxiety is largely self-explanatory. Essentially a dog with separation anxiety feels such stress from being apart from his owner that it causes destructive and annoying behaviors. A dog with separation anxiety will often chew your things while you are gone. He will often go to the bathroom in the house or in his crate. A yelping, barking, or whining dog is often caused by separation anxiety.

Separation anxiety is a real disorder. It is rare, however. Most dogs that are destructive while left alone simply have poor house manners.

Unfortunately, drug companies and veterinarians often want to diagnose any level of destruction as separation anxiety. If your dog is destructive approach it from a training standpoint. Don't immediately diagnose separation anxiety. The best treatment for actual separation anxiety, however, is a training program combined with proper medication. Talk to your vet about the proper medication, read on for good training advice.

A dog with separation anxiety will often be destructive in exit areas such as the front door. If your dog is destroying the door frame or digging at the floor near the door it is likely that you are dealing with this disorder. Dogs that are left in a crate may howl and bark endlessly. You may come home to find that he has worked his nails raw by scratching at the crate. You may find him in a puddle of saliva from drooling or endless yelping. Be careful, though. If your dog chewed on the couch or peed on the floor it may not be separation anxiety. If he overturned the trash can it is likely not separation anxiety. If he went after your shoes you likely just need to work on house manners.

I like to compare this problem to certain human problems. There are many people that when under a lot of stress do certain destructive behaviors. People are known to chew their nails, over-eat, not sleep, and other such destructive and annoying behaviors. The same thing is happening to your dog. With your dog, however, it isn't problems at work or in a marriage that are causing the stress. It is being away from you that causes the stress.

Dogs are pack animals. They thrive by being part of a group that eats together, sleeps together, plays together, etc. When you go away to work, you take away the pack. For some dogs this is just too much to deal with and they manifest that stress through behaviors that you find unacceptable.

The cure for separation anxiety is rarely easy. For some the best option is to use a doggy daycare. This can be a pricey solution, however, and not everyone has access to a good one in their community. For those that don't have the option of daycare, your best bet is proper medicine and training. The training typically

takes a lot of work but it can be done if you are willing to work with your canine friend to help him feel more at ease when you leave.

While the methods and techniques are going to vary, there is one ultimate goal when attempting to cure separation anxiety. That goal is to show your dog that being separated from you is not as stressful as he thinks, and that there are ways to deal with any stress that he feels.

Unfortunately many dog owners worsen the effects of separation anxiety. They arrive home to find a mess or destruction and start yelling at their dog. Remember, separation anxiety is caused by stress. By yelling at your dog you are only causing more stress. You are actually worsening the problem instead of helping it.

To deal with this problem you need to help your dog achieve a shift in perception. He needs to understand how to deal with stress when you are gone.

The first step

The first step I take in dealing with every dog that has separation anxiety is by using a crate.

Dogs have a natural den instinct left over from their ancestors the wolves. Dogs have a desire to be in a snug, enclosed area where they can feel comfortable and safe. Inside this 'den' the dog feels secure. Ideally, as dog owners, we use a dog crate to simulate this feeling.

The reason I use a dog crate to deal with separation anxiety is because of this secure and safe feeling. If a dog feels comfortable in his crate you can transfer that feeling to when you leave the

house. If Buddy used to feel stressed when you left, but now he has a place that is comfortable both physically and mentally, he can now feel good while you are gone.

If you can help him to feel good while you are gone you will condition him to not feel stressed when you leave. Think about it, before training Buddy probably had dozens of bad experiences when you left. He felt stressed, and as a result he peed, or chewed your couch, or howled endlessly. Now you are using the crate. Now, because of the crate, he has dozens of new and good experiences when you leave. Now when you leave he is in his crate and feels comfortable. He doesn't feel the same stress because he is in his 'stress-free zone'. As a result he doesn't feel the need to be destructive.

Conditioning your dog to the crate

If you have never used a crate with your dog you may find that you need to condition him to the crate before you can use it as a tool to fix separation anxiety.

There is no time line for how quickly you can achieve crate conditioning so take these next steps as they come. Go as fast as your dog will allow.

- 1) Begin by introducing your dog to the crate. Put it in a comfortable area of the home that isn't exposed to direct sunlight or drafts. Take your dog to the open door of the crate on leash. Encourage him to enter as you are sitting down next to the door. As he is in the crate pet him and talk in a comforting manner.
- 2) Close the door of the crate but remain sitting right next to the door. Talk to your dog and help him to feel good. Don't coddle him

if he is whining or howling, ignore him if he does that. Reward him only for calm, even-keeled behavior.

3) Leave the room for five to ten seconds and come right back. When you come back don't pay him attention. Just sit down in view of your dog for a few moments.

4) Increase the time that you are out of the room. Every time when you return take a few minutes and sit calmly in view of your dog but don't talk to him or pay him attention. The reason you do this is because you don't want to make your return a momentous occasion. You want your dog to accept your comings and goings as normal and no cause for excitement or foreboding.

5) Leave the house for your work or activities.

Once your dog is conditioned to the crate now it is time to use it when you leave the house. Put your dog in the crate about fifteen minutes before you leave the house. When you come home don't take him out until you have been home for about five to fifteen minutes. Remember, we don't want to mark your comings and goings with any big events. Your movements need to be done in a calm manner.

As I mentioned before, there is no time line for conditioning your dog. Many dogs will progress through this entire training in an afternoon. Many dogs will take much longer. If you leave your dog and he howls and cries just ignore him. If you return to comfort him you will just teach him that when he makes noise it will cause you to return. Ignore him for long enough and he should realize that barking and whining will not get him his what he wants.

Occasionally you will find a dog with separation anxiety that is destructive in his crate. Dogs like this have been known to chew up a crate, dig at the crate, or otherwise find a way to break out. The best way to deal with this is to purchase a specially made metal crate that is built to be indestructible. Your dog will likely try to escape but will eventually learn that it is impossible. When you take away the option of escape you help your dog to be more calm.

Additional tips

There are a few additional things that you can do to help combat separation anxiety that also serve as prevention.

Avoid doing things that are going to create too deep of a bond with your dog. This is easier said than done. Everyone wants a strong bond with their dog, and you should have one. Adjusting your behavior may help to avoid or fix separation anxiety and shouldn't have a negative affect on the relationship between you and your dog:

Here are a few tips:

- 1) Don't allow your dog to sleep with you.
- 2) Don't allow your dog to rest with you on the couch.
- 3) Don't carry your dog everywhere. Make sure your dog walks on a leash and have him walk where ever you go.
- 4) Make sure your dog spends time in the crate from the time you get him. Get him started from the beginning spending time on his own and being comfortable with solitude.

5) Make your comings and goings have a neutral association in your dog's mind. When you leave don't get your dog riled up by having a tearful good bye. Instead, put him in the crate and ignore him for several minutes and then leave with no fanfare. When you arrive home ignore him for several minutes. Then calmly get him out of the crate and take him out to the bathroom. Owners will often make their dogs more anxious by teaching the dog that leaving is so stressful and arriving home is such a blessing. Help your dog feel neutral about your exits and returns.

6) Neutralize your exit strategy. Have you ever noticed that when you leave you have a certain set of steps that you follow? You probably get your coat, check the doors, get your keys, etc. For a dog with separation anxiety these steps are all just build up to the horrible event of you leaving. What you can do is 'trick' your dog. At random times during the day follow your exit steps. Grab your keys, then put them back down. Put on your coat and head for the door and then take off the coat and sit back down. If you can teach your dogs that these build up events are not causes for stress you can help your dog deal better when you actually leave.

7) Use common sense and if you see that something you are doing is creating a dependence in your dog, stop doing it.

- Excessive barking in the crate.

Dogs bark in the crate for many reasons. Perhaps there is some sort of stimulation, like a cat in the room. Sometimes a very vocal dog will bark just for the sake of doing something while in the crate. And sometimes your dog will bark hoping that his barking will bring you back so you can let him out.

Let me address the latter issue first. One of the mistakes that many owners make is that when Buddy starts barking they immediately think "Oh, poor Buddy. Let me go get him." Buddy, being the intelligent dog that he is thinks, "Aha, if I want to get out all I have to do is bark and here comes dad and mom."

The way to fix this is to basically ignore Buddy when he barks. Remember, things that are positively enforced are repeated. So if his barking brings you to the crate, he is going to continue barking. But if his barking does not produce the desired result then chances are he will quit barking.

Ah, you got me. I said chances are he will stop barking. You are right, this isn't going to fix every dog. If it doesn't work you have to go to the next step. This next step is also the fix that you will use if the dog is barking because of an outside stimulus or because he is merely a vocal dog. So lets analyze the problem. Buddy keeps barking inside the crate. If there is any action that is done repeatedly it is done because Buddy gets satisfaction out of it. He has a positive association toward that behavior, in this case, barking. In order to get him to stop barking, we've got to change his association from positive to negative.

There are many ways to turn a positive barking association into a negative association. One of the best ways is a bark collar that emits an electric correction when the dog barks. It is so effective because it works whether or not you are around. It also kicks in the omnipotent principle. The dog doesn't see where the correction is coming from, all he knows that when he barks he feels a correction. Soon he learns that barking is not the best option. The only drawback to this type of collar is that there are many poorly

designed collars on the market. An associate of mine used a poorly designed collar and every time a car drove it would trigger the collar and his poor dog would get corrected. Other collars are known for giving corrections at the wrong time and for the wrong things. Visit my website for collars that I recommend.

For those that don't have the funds to buy a bark collar there are other options. One is to hide in a position such that when Buddy starts barking you can immediately appear and spray water in the crate with a spray bottle. (Make sure the crate isn't on your expensive oriental rug when you do this.) For a lot of dogs having water splashed in their face is a negative experience and if you can do it consistently several times Buddy will begin to associate barking with this negative spray and will stop.

Another method also deals with hiding very close and waiting for his bark. When he starts barking you can immediately appear and shake his crate while telling him 'No' repeatedly. Again, if you can do this consistently it may create a negative enough association with barking to oblige him to stop.

If these methods aren't working you can also employ a pattern interrupt. A pattern interrupt employs the idea of startling the dog into a new behavior.

For example, when Buddy begins to bark you can throw a tin can on the floor near him. It obviously isn't going to give him a correction but it may startle him into not barking. That is to say that his energy is now expended toward paying attention to where the sound came from and not toward barking. As he stops barking you praise him. If he starts barking, you interrupt the pattern

again with the can and praise him for not barking. This method can work but will typically take longer than the other methods.

Try these methods and see which one works best for you and your dog in your particular situation. Either by employing one or the combination of several you will be able to curb Buddy's barking.

More help for barking may be found in the accompanying "Perfect Dog Behavior Secrets and the "8 Minute Problem Behavior Cure."