

## **DOGS - Constant barking can be avoided**

Barking comes naturally to dogs, but the constant barking or whining of a dog can be very disturbing or annoying for your neighbours. Often this problem occurs when you are out of the house and you do not realise that someone has complained.

In law a barking dog can be a noise nuisance. You, as the owner, could be taken to court if you do nothing to stop the nuisance.

### **Why dogs bark**

Dogs are not by nature solitary animals, they need the security of a family group. Pet dogs regard their owners as a substitute family and can soon become distressed when left alone for long lengths of time.

**Some reasons a dog may bark:** loneliness, boredom or frustration, attention seeking, defending his territory, medical problems.

### **Training**

Training is important so that your dog does not bark at anything that moves. A well-trained dog should be able to distinguish between visitors allowed into the house and who are intruders. Good training is essential at an early age. This combined with affection and companionship should mean that your dog will not develop these bad habits. Always start as you mean to go on.

### **Some simple things to try**

Some dogs just do not want you to go out. Get your dog used to the idea using some of the following tips:

- Leave at differing times during the day. That way he may not be so concerned each time you leave. Don't make a fuss of your dog when you leave him.
- Try putting the dog on his own in another room for a few minutes, then gradually build up the time you leave your dog alone. Do not return to the dog until he is quiet for a period. When you return, praise him.
- Some dogs bark because they want to join in with what's going on outside. If this is the problem, try leaving your dog where he cannot see outside.
- Some dogs will settle only if they can hear a human voice.
- Leaving the radio or television on at a low volume may help.
- Try not to leave your dog for long periods, but if you have to, see if there is someone who can look in during that time. Maybe that person could take the dog for a walk or let him out into the garden, if you have one. A dog door is very useful to allow the dog access to the garden when you are not there. However, check with your neighbours to make sure that he is not barking in your absence.

### **If you do have to leave your dog for long periods:**

- Feed and exercise him before you go out and leave him fresh water to drink.
- Make sure his bed or basket is comfortable and not in a draught or direct sunlight.
- Leave him a large marrow bone to chew and some of his favourite toys to play with.

- Make sure that the room is not hot or cold and that there is adequate ventilation.
- If you are not returning until after dark, either leave a light on or use a night light that comes on automatically when it gets dark.
- Try not to put his kennel near a neighbour's fence where the dog may be tempted to bark.
- Ensure the garden is completely secure to prevent your dog from straying locally and causing problems to neighbours.
- Don't blame the dog and think that you will solve the problem by replacing him with another. All dogs bark and unless you change your lifestyle at the same time, the problem will still be there.
- Considering a second dog for company may help. But think about this carefully. Do you have the space and can you afford it? A second dog could result in more, not fewer problems.
- Old dogs can be taught new tricks. Contact your vet for advice.