

Responsible ownership

# Barking dogs

**WOOF!**

**RUFF!**

**BARK!**



## A big issue

Dogs will bark – it's their natural form of communication. The issue arises however when they bark or howl persistently.

It's important for owners to understand what makes their dog bark. What are the triggers? Is it birds in trees? Is it people walking near your fence line?

When you're not at home, use cameras to record your dog, this will confirm the triggers for barking.

Once you understand the triggers it's much easier to manage their behaviour. Barking can be managed through environment enrichment, but it's also useful to seek advice from your local veterinary clinic.

## Environment enrichment

Environmental enrichment involves providing a variety of toys and activities which satisfy a dog's natural instincts to sniff, chew, lick, dig and play.

## Talk to your vet

We recommend that you consult your veterinarian who can provide advice and may refer you to an animal behaviourist. If a dog is showing signs of anxiety or stress, medication can even be prescribed in combination with regular training and exercise.







## Things to try

- 1** Dogs love a treasure hunt. Scatter dry food across the lawn or inside the house.
- 2** Hide their dry food or some treats in a snuffle mat or food puzzle toy. These can be found in local shops, online or in pet shops.
- 3** Spread dry food or treats across an old towel. Roll it up and let your dog find the food.
- 4** Licking is a natural behaviour which helps dogs to self soothe. Freeze dry food or treats in a container filled with liquid to make a doggy ice block.
- 5** Consider installing a doggy door.
- 6** Keep a tv, radio or podcast running (something with human voices) to help comfort the dog and block out external noises and triggers. Videos made to entertain or calm down dogs can be found online.
- 7** Let your dog keep their favourite toy, but rotate their other toys to maintain interest.
- 8** Set up a digging area in the garden or in an old paddle pool or sand pit. Bury some treats and toys to show your dog this spot is for digging.
- 9** Make training a reward-based activity and use positive reinforcement. Reward when the dog is quiet and look away and ignore when the dog barks.
- 10** Break up the week with visits to other friends and family members' homes.
- 11** Ensure your dog has regular exercise and mix up the scenery a bit. You can head to the beach, the park, or set up a play date with another dog.
- 12** If you don't have time for a long walk make it a short, high-sensory one instead, by allowing your dog to sniff around for longer and explore at their own pace.
- 13** Off-leash exercise is great for working dog breeds, but only if your dog is okay with this and is under effective control.
- 14** There are also doggy day cares and dog walking services that are run during the day while you're at work.



### Call

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