

## Better Dog Behavior: Barking

**There are four basic categories into which barking falls: alerting, attention-getting, communication and excitement.**

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There are many reasons why a dog barks. Though the cause of the noise may be different in different dogs, the effect it has on the humans who hear it is the same. A short, crisp bark may get our attention, but consistent barking can quickly turn to pure annoyance. And since the sounds of a barking dog are heard by not only the owner but also by all those within hearing range, the barking can quickly escalate into a public nuisance.

However, there are certain times and circumstances when the bark of a dog is a welcome and reassuring sound, such as warning of approaching danger, the smoke of a fire, the presence of a stranger or the whimper of a sick child. These are all occasions when a dog's bark can avert disaster. Therefore it would be extremely unwise to condemn a dog for barking before we learn why he is doing it.

There are four basic categories into which barking falls: alerting, attention-getting, communication and excitement. Let's look at these in more detail to determine the correct course of action that an owner should use in response to each type of barking.

Next step: Why does a dog bark?

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