

## Barking Out of Excitement

**Dogs often bark when they're anticipating something that excites them.**

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### Reason for Barking: Excitement

Dogs verbalize their emotions much as people do. For example, they often bark during play when they get very excited. They also bark when they're anticipating something that excites them, such as a game of fetch, a special doggie treat or going out for a walk with his owner. Frustration also can create barking in a dog. Let's say the dog wants to play with a favorite toy that is in his sight but out of his reach. He may attempt to get the toy but, when those efforts fail, he may stand there and stare at the toy while he barks incessantly until someone comes to retrieve the toy for him.

If you can determine the cause of the barking, you should allow it for a reasonable amount of time. Lowering the level of excitement usually lowers the bark reflex, and you usually can control this. When you wish to quiet the dog, change the cause of his excitement to a more calming activity. As soon as the barking lessens, praise the dog with "Good, quiet." In the case of frustration, lessen his barking by alleviating the dog's frustration or removing the dog from the cause of his frustration.

It's beneficial to both dogs and people that dog owners understand the causes and appropriate human responses to barking. Often when small dogs bark they are sounding an alarm. Big dogs, on the other hand, bark to issue a warning and/or threat. When people respond appropriately to barking, they generally set the pattern for the barking to subside yet recur when necessary. Conversely, responding inappropriately usually escalates the barking and thereby solicits more barking.

In short, with barking or other of their dogs behavior, owners should recognize positive behavior and ignore or divert negative behavior. Remember, behaviors that bring pleasant results tend to be repeated, whereas behaviors that bring on unpleasant results are usually not repeated. To a dog, being ignored is most unpleasant, so the dog quickly figures out that, in order to get pleasant attention, he must repeat certain behaviors (such as not barking unnecessarily) and stop others.

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