

# WHY IS MY DOG BARKING?

Dogs communicate with each other and with humans by vocalizing. To address the problem of excessive barking, it is necessary to determine why your dog is barking.

## Need More Help?

Find additional resources at  
[pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).

## Reasons for barking:

- **Alert:** Alert barking may be a warning for intruders in an attempt by the dog to protect their territory. This type of barking sometimes includes growling. The dog will usually stop barking once the person or animal is out of sight. Dogs with separation anxiety may sound like they are alert barking, but for hours at a time.
- **Loneliness/Boredom:** Usually a repetitive, short bark extending over a long duration. This may include howling or other mournful cries.
- **Anxiety/Fear:** Can be similar to alert barking and may be accompanied with growls or howls. Dogs with separation anxiety may sound like they are alert barking, only for hours at a time.\*

## Recommendations:

- For dogs who bark because of anxiety or fear, it can be helpful to enroll them in a positive-reinforcement training program, such as one of the classes offered at Pasadena Humane.
- Leave your dog indoors when you are gone. Dogs left unattended outdoors are more prone to both alert and boredom barking.
- Close windows and limit visual access to outdoor stimuli that cause your dog to alert bark. Turning up the TV or radio might help, too.
- Dogs are social animals. Limit the amount of time your dog is left alone by hiring a dog walker or asking a neighbor to come by to visit. Doggy day care facilities may be appropriate for some dogs, depending on your work schedule.
- Access to a yard (even if it's large) is not enough! Mental stimulation and exercise are very important parts of your dog's daily routine. By walking your dog daily, you are providing them with exercise as well as enrichment. Sniffing the environment can reduce stress.

## Boredom busters:

Along with exercise, providing new and fun things for your dog to interact with daily can help to prevent excessive barking. Here are a few ideas:

- **Snuffle mats:** Scatter your dog's kibble on a bathmat or fleece rug so that they have to sniff around for their breakfast.
- **Kongs, Lickimats, or other food stuffed toys:** Some dogs find licking to be soothing. Putting their food into a toy might help with mild anxiety.
- **Chew toys:** Providing your dog with things to chew, such as antlers or bully sticks, can help some dogs relax. You should always supervise your dog while they are chewing.
- **Busy boxes:** Allowing your dog to tear apart cardboard boxes filled with new toys, treats or even their meal can help them blow off some steam. Try using egg cartons, cereal boxes or paper towel rolls.

*\* If you feel your dog is experiencing severe separation anxiety and you need help from a professional dog trainer, please visit [pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior) for resources on how to find a trainer near you.*

**We are always here to help! You can find additional behavior and training resources at [pasadenahumane.org/behavior](https://pasadenahumane.org/behavior).**



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