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Barking At Noises

All dogs bark at noises sometimes. But when it happens repeatedly or is difficult to interrupt, follow these tips for a quieter home.

Mask Noises

An easy way to reduce barking at sounds outside your home, play white noise or water sounds, especially when you’re away. While some people play music or turn on the TV, the volume and sound is inconsistent, letting more noises break through.

Changing Behavior

If there are specific sounds outside that are more problematic, you can change the dog’s reaction by following the noise with something the dog really likes. This could be a game of fetch or tug, or a treat, whatever your dog likes most. This teaches your dog that every time there's one of these sounds, good things happen.

Even if your dog starts barking, go ahead and grab that toy or treat. This won’t teach a dog to bark for treats because you always react after the noise, whether they bark, or not. The treats/play follow the SOUND, not the barking! nBe consistent and mask sounds when you’re gone or aren’t able to focus on training.

TIP: Have containers of treats in rooms where you spend the most time with your dog.

When a noise happens, call your dog, go to the treat container, and start tossing treats. This way, you won’t need to always have treats in your pocket.

No-Bark Devices

Products that claim to “stop barking” only interrupt or suppress barking temporarily, but don’t change the behavior long-term. This method changes the dog’s association to the sound that triggers barking. In other words, the noise starts to predict fun/tasty things and is no longer a threat to bark at.

Fireworks And Thunderstorms

While some dogs don’t have trouble with these noises, it’s best to assume they will be a problem for a new dog. Dogs that panic during fireworks can escape their collars, yards, and houses, causing serious injury to themselves or damage to walls, doors, and windows.

If you don’t know how your dog does with fireworks, don’t leave them home alone. Have a plan to hang out in a quiet area of the house. If you play recorded fireworks sounds, they can drown out the real fireworks better than white noise.

If your dog starts to show fear, follow their lead:

* If they choose to hide in their crate, a closet, or under the bed, don't try to coax them out or comfort them. Try to mask the sounds as best as you can and give them their space.
* If they seek your comfort, it’s okay to reassure and pet them. Comforting your dog will not “reward the fear.”

If they need a potty break while the fireworks are happening, take them out on-leash, even if you have a fenced yard, and check that they can’t slip out of their collar.

For dogs that have severe reactions to fireworks sounds, the most effective form of relief is anti-anxiety medication from your veterinarian.

These tips are effective for most dogs, but if your dog’s barking doesn’t become easier to manage or they are barking at more than just noises, you may need the help of a behavior expert. Visit www. IAABC.org to find a professional near you.