

How to fix:

# **DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR and EXCESSIVE BARKING**



Is your dog using your house as a chew toy and destroying everything? Does your dog bark non-stop while you're gone at work, or even when your home? These behaviors develop due to boredom and lack of proper stimulation and exercise. The best way to begin dealing with these issues is to prevent your dog from being able to practice them. Keep your dog crated when not at home to prevent him from destructive behavior. If there are certain activities or times your dog barks excessively, prevent your dog from being able to bark at these moments.

Next, start stimulating your dog mentally and physically.

## **Here are some ways to mentally stimulate your dog:**

- Training class. There are tons of different classes out there. Classes increase the bond with your dog, teach you new skills to deal with your troublesome canine, and stimulate your dog.
- Make meals into fun games! There is no rule saying your dog has to be fed in a bowl. Use your dog's kibble as training treats and mix some hot dogs or chicken in it to make it more desirable. If you have a breed that likes to sniff, hide food around the house and play "find it" or throw the kibble out in the backyard and make your dog work for its meal.
- Clicker train your dog! Teach your dog a new trick or a new behavior. Mental stimulation is a great way to exhaust your dog on a rainy day.
- Feed meals in a Kong or Puzzle Ball so your dog has to use its brain.

## **Here are some ways to physically stimulate your dog:**

- Long walks, hikes or runs. This is good for your dog and for you!
- Bring your dog to daycare so it can play with other dogs to get energy out.
- Agility. This is mentally and physically stimulating.
- Have a breed that likes swimming? Dock jumping is a great activity!
- Play frisby or catch.



**Remember: A tired dog is a well behaved dog.**

### Other ways to deal with these behaviors:

- If your dog is a chewer, provide it owner-approved items to chew on. Kongs filled with treats will keep your dog occupied, or rawhides (under supervision) are an excellent way to give your dog an outlet for chewing.
- Teach your dog a “quiet” command. Once your dog will respond by being quiet when asked, you can teach him a speak command. This allows the dog to use his voice, but only when asked.

Every dog and situation is different. Speak with a staff member about your dogs specific habits for more personalized suggestions that will best fit your dogs needs.

### Training the “Quiet” command

- This exercise requires the use of a Gentle Leader (GL).
- DO NOT say the “quiet” command unless you are able to follow through with the procedure 100%!!
- Remember to be consistent!! Best results are seen with 100% consistency!
- Ensure the GL (Gentle Leader) is properly sized. The dog will see the GL as a multifunctional tool. It is not only a great behavior modification tool, but also a great way to walk your dog without the pulling! He will continue to look forward to the GL being put on for walks, and will not see that as a punishment.
- When the dog starts barking, say the dog's name and then the cue “Quiet!” in a firm voice.
- If the dog barks again (within three minutes of you giving the cue), say, “Time out!” in a firm, but not angry voice.
- Gently apply the GL, giving no feedback (do not talk to the dog).
- Leave the GL on for one minute. If the dog is still barking after a minute, wait until he is quiet for at least three seconds before removing the GL.
- Remove the GL.
- Ask for, or lure, the dog into a down.
- Reward lavishly with treats, petting, and praise for the dog being quiet.
- Repeat as necessary.



If you do not have a GL handy, and the dog is barking: Put yourself in between your dog, and what he is barking at. Stand tall, face the dog, and have your hands behind your back.

“Body block” the dog backwards (use your body to occupy space. Slowly shuffle into the dog, invading his space. Keep your legs shoulder width apart, maintain eye contact with the dog and slowly back the dog up). As long as he is barking, continue to move into the dog (try not to step on the dog, but do not allow him to sneak around you).

Once the dog stops barking, ask for some obedience: sit, down, or do some targeting.

**Reward the dog lavishly once his attention is on you.**

Sometimes this process can be lengthy. You may find yourself body blocking the dog backwards fifty yards before he gets it. Once again, consistency is key; if you do this process each time he barks, he will not find barking as rewarding as he once did, and the frequency and intensity will start to subside.

Remember to always have treats on you. Steak and chicken are great motivators! Most dogs will prefer a treat for sitting as opposed to being body blocked backwards for three city blocks!