

Whining, Howling, Barking and Other Dog and Puppy Vocalisations

Whining, crying, barking, and howling often result when a dog is left alone. Puppies will whine and cry when separated from their owners. The puppy is afraid he is being abandoned by his pack and is sounding the alarm so that he can be rescued. The reason excessive whining continues is because the dog has learned that whining, crying or barking gets whatever he wants - attention, food, affection. Often what starts out as a demand whining soon becomes an unconscious whining habit.

To prevent an annoying whining habit, teach your dog to accept short periods of confinement before leaving him alone for long periods of time. Spend time with your dog in the area where he is left and show him that this is a fun place to be. If he starts whining or howling when you leave, don't rush back to let him out or reassure him. If you do, he will soon learn that he can control you with his whining blackmail. However, if barking, whining or howling continues then he probably is not yet comfortable in his confinement area. Spend a little more time with him there. Then when you leave, if he continues barking, whining or howling, give him a loud and stern 'NO!' After he has been quiet for a few moments, return and praise him lavishly. Practice leaving and returning several times so he becomes accustomed to your departures and realizes that you are not abandoning him forever. He will see that you will return and there's nothing to worry about. Practice leaving him for longer and longer periods of time.

If your dog is whining or howling when you are at home, either for attention or just out of habit, the first step in stopping this is to provide your dog with daily routines of play, exercise and training. Often these special times of undivided attention will stop the dog from whining the rest of the day. Secondly, pay attention to your dog only when he is quiet. Ignore him whenever he begins demanding your attention by whining. Each time you give in to your dog's whining demands, you are training him to continue whining. If you want a few moments of peace, you can teach the dog to be quiet on request. Gently ask your dog to please 'Stop Whining.' If he ignores you and continues whining, immediately shout a very loud, 'STOP WHINING!' or squirt the dog in the face with water. After a few repetitions, the dog will get the idea and obey the first gentle request of 'Stop Whining,' rather than get scolded or doused with water.

Unusual whining or whining that starts suddenly when it never existed before may be your dog's way of telling you that something is wrong. See your veterinarian right away to be sure no health problems exist.