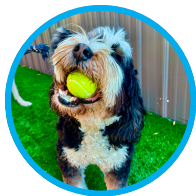


BARK U Training Guide: Managing and Preventing Attention-Seeking Behavior



Attention-seeking behavior, like barking, pawing, jumping, or whining, can be frustrating—but it's your dog's way of communicating. While some attention-seeking is normal, excessive behavior often develops when it's unintentionally reinforced. With consistent training and management, you can redirect your dog's energy toward more appropriate behaviors.

Why Do Dogs Seek Attention?

- **Boredom:** Lack of mental and physical stimulation leads to attention-seeking behaviors.
- **Reinforcement:** Even negative reactions (like scolding) can encourage attention-seeking.
- **Desire for Interaction:** Dogs naturally crave interaction with their humans, and they'll repeat behaviors that get a response.

Prevention Tips

1. Meet Your Dog's Needs

- **Exercise:** Ensure your dog gets daily physical activity through walks, play, or other forms of exercise. A tired dog is less likely to engage in attention-seeking behavior.
- **Mental Stimulation:** Incorporate puzzle toys, training sessions, or enrichment activities to keep their mind engaged.
- **Schedule Interaction:** Provide consistent, intentional interaction through play, training, or cuddles.

2. Ignore Unwanted Behavior

- **Don't Reward Negative Attention:** Avoid reacting to barking, whining, or pawing. Even scolding can reinforce the behavior.
- **Stay Consistent:** If you ignore the behavior once but respond another time, your dog may escalate their efforts to get your attention.



3. Reward Good Behavior

- **Catch Them Being Calm:** Praise and reward your dog when they're quietly resting or entertaining themselves.
- **Use Training to Redirect:** Reinforce behaviors you want to see, like sitting quietly or lying on a designated spot.

Training Techniques

1. Teach the "Quiet" Cue

Help your dog learn to stop attention-seeking behaviors like barking or whining:

- Wait for a pause in the unwanted behavior.
- Say "Quiet" in a calm, firm voice and reward them immediately with a treat or praise when they stop.
- Gradually increase the time they must remain quiet before receiving a reward.

2. Mat/Place Training

Teach your dog to relax in a designated spot:

- Choose a comfortable mat or bed and place it in a quiet area.
- Use a cue like "Go to your mat" to encourage your dog to go to the spot. Reward them for staying there.
- Gradually increase the duration they stay on the mat before releasing them.
- Redirect attention-seeking behaviors by calmly guiding them to their mat.

What to Do During Attention-Seeking Episodes

1. **Stay Calm:** Avoid giving in to whining, barking, or pawing. This will only reinforce the behavior.
2. **Redirect to an Appropriate Behavior:** For example, give your dog a chew toy or guide them to their mat.
3. **Avoid Eye Contact or Physical Touch:** These can inadvertently reinforce the behavior.

Long-Term Strategies

1. Structure Your Interactions



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- Provide attention on your terms, not your dog's. Initiate play, cuddles, or training when your dog is calm, not when they're demanding it.
 - Stick to a consistent daily routine to help your dog understand when they can expect interaction.
2. **Practice Impulse Control**
- Work on commands like "Leave it," "Wait," or "Stay" to build your dog's ability to control impulses and wait for your attention.
3. **Avoid Reinforcing the Behavior**
- If your dog barks, whines, or nudges for attention, ignore them until they stop. Then, reward calm behavior immediately to reinforce the alternative.

Tips for Success

- **Consistency is Key:** Everyone in the household should follow the same rules to avoid confusing your dog.
- **Stay Patient:** Breaking attention-seeking habits takes time. Celebrate small victories!
- **Redirect Appropriately:** Give your dog acceptable outlets for their energy and desire for interaction.

By addressing the root cause of attention-seeking behavior and providing consistent training and engagement, you can help your dog become calmer and more self-reliant. If you have questions or need additional support, we're here to help!



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