

A-OK9

THE SECRET TO STOPPING BARKING FOR GOOD!



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A dog that barks can be a huge drain on your relationship. They bark, we shout, they bark more!

It becomes a vicious cycle of noise that only seems to get worse.

So how can we fix it?

There are three aspects to barking. We tend to place more emphasis on one of them, so the other two may surprise you!

Believe it or not, brain and gut wellness have a huge impact. And it's the interaction between the brain and gut that is particularly significant!



Let's start with the brain

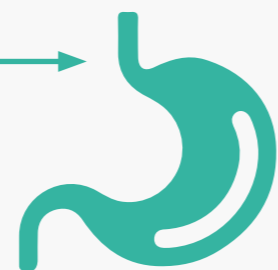
There are two key 'neurotransmitters,' that are important:

- **GABA**, a neurotransmitter which provides a calming effect on the brain and body
- **Serotonin**, which helps to stabilise moods, regulate feelings of well-being and happiness, regulate anxiety and control sleep



And now the gut

Serotonin actually has to be made by the body and the way it does that is through **L-tryptophan**, which can only be supplied

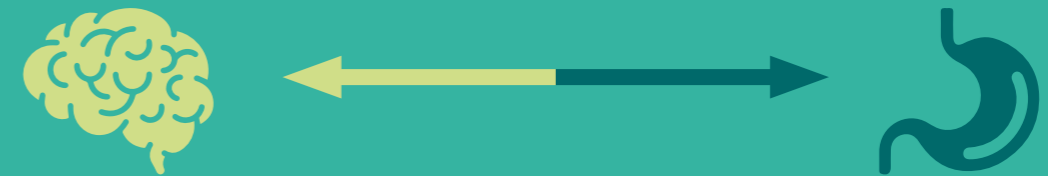


But there's more.....



The good bacteria in the gut also impact neurotransmitter creation and even directly signal to the brain.

So, we can improve how the brain feels, by what's in the gut!



If any of these processes are out of whack, it can affect our dog's behaviour and how they react to the environment, particularly...you've guessed it...with barking!

How do we know this?

A team of researchers explored the impact a challenged microbiome had on the brains of mice by giving one a group of mice a probiotic and another group of mice no probiotic. They found for the mice given a probiotic, there was an alteration of GABA receptor expression, and a reduction in anxiety-related behaviour [1].

In another study, researchers transplanted the microbiome from a group of clinically depressed people into the gut of rats. This caused deregulation of tryptophan metabolism and so the rats became more fearful and pessimistic [2]. Researchers also found a group of microbiome-free mice displayed nervous, timid and fearful behaviour towards their own kind [3].



This information means we can use probiotics and other superfoods to support both the GABA and serotonin pathways and to boost gut health!

There are foods that can support brain-gut wellness?

Absolutely!

Take a look at Melissa officinalis, otherwise known as Lemon Balm. It has been used by humans to reduce stress, insomnia, headaches and indigestion for years [4]. However, even more interesting are studies into the potential memory improving properties of the herb in people with Alzheimer's disease [5] and another study showing an improvement in cognitive performance and mood in healthy, young people [6].

And then there's the beautiful Passiflora. Studies have shown Passiflora to strengthen the effectiveness of GABA brain receptors which in turn decreases the activity of the nervous system and aids relaxation [7].

And of course, not forgetting the aforementioned L-tryptophan, which is an amino acid found in certain proteins.

So if you're looking for a convenient way to boost your dog's brain and gut wellness, look no further than **Calm-K9** which has been specifically formulated by a vet and team of nutritionists!

**Take me to
Calm-K9**



Now for the training part of the puzzle!

Barking is loud and annoying – sometimes it's embarrassing or even frightening, but it can help to know that there is an underlying feeling that our dogs are experiencing to cause that behaviour.

- They're frustrated – they've woken up in their crate and don't want to miss out on anything
- They're over-excited – in the boot of the car just before a walk
- They're worried – they're anxious around dogs and one is heading straight for them

It might start off with the occasional bark, but it tends to spread and before you know it, not only does the dog bark at the doorbell, they bark when they hear voices outside or when a car door slams or when there are footsteps past the house.

The more they practice doing it, the better they become at it!



These feelings are often amplified when your dog's bucket is full!

What on earth are we talking about?

Introducing the stress bucket!

Imagine your dog has a bucket. Everything they do and every event they experience, whether good or bad, pays into that bucket:

- visitors arriving
- chasing a squirrel
- having their nails clipped
- going to training...

The more full the stress bucket is, the more likely your dog is to bark at something. Especially if the bucket gets to the point it overflows!

And when barking starts being well-rehearsed, it can become associated with certain things.

- See a dog? I bark!
- Someone at the door? I bark
- Hear a loud noise? I bark!

Try making a list of things that pay into your dog's bucket.

Is there anything you could do to change some of those things?

- Could you pop your dog somewhere quiet when the visitors come round?
- Perhaps hiding a ball for your dog to hunt out rather than always throwing it
- Using a frosting film on your window so they can't see the people walking by



The good news is that the bucket has a hole, so the liquid can drain. But wouldn't it be great if we could help that along?

Actually, we can, by using the magic of the opposite emotion – **calmness**.

And the more they practice calmness, the better they get at it!

There are 3 different ways we can encourage calmness, shown on the calmness wheel.

PASSIVE CALMING ACTIVITIES

Scatter Feeding, Meaty Bones, Filled Kongs, Treat Balls, Filled Tracheas, Dehydrated Treats, Scenting, Puzzle Feeders

CALMNESS PROTOCOL

Feed whenever calm, time feeding with external distractions and if you want to not train at any time pop them in a crate or give them a passive calming activity. Dont get frustrated.



REST

Crates, Pens, Rooms, Experienced Dogs on Raised Beds

Passive Calming Activities

These are activities which encourage calmness, like kongs, lickable K9 calm mats, long-lasting chews and even sniffing! Think about what activities your dog finds calming.

Calmness Protocol

Keep some of your dog's daily food allowance to one side and using it to reward them for moments of calm settling as they happen. What gets rewarded, they rehearse. We're going to say it again, what they rehearse, they become!

Active Rest

An over-tired dog is not going to make good choices. And they might need more rest than you think. The challenge is that often our dogs don't properly rest unless we encourage them to do so. They might need to go somewhere where they can truly switch off, rather than sleeping with one eye open! That might be a puppy pen, a crate, or a chill out zone of the house.

FACT!

Ideally an adult dog should have around 16 hours a day of active and passive rest!

And last, but not least, what is your dog expecting to happen?

Another aspect to barking is when dogs are expecting something exciting to happen. They can't wait, they're primed and ready for action!

We need to show them that, actually, they're mistaken, nothing important is happening right now. But how do we do that without them getting frustrated?

We give them a consolation prize!

But it's a calming consolation prize.

It could be anything like calm training games, a long-lasting chew or scatter feeding some food in the grass.

Think about all the times your dog expects something exciting to happen. What could you have ready as a consolation prize for these times?



SUMMARY:

And there you have it! Buckets, consolation prizes and Calm-K9 - the solution to stopping barking!

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