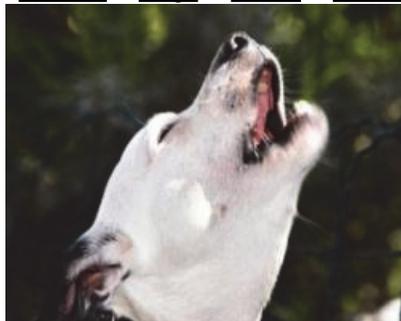


Published on *Webvet* (<http://www.webvet.com/main>)

[Home](#) > [training](#) > [Curbing your dog's barking](#) > [Curbing your dog's barking](#)

Curbing your dog's barking

[counsel](#) [Dogs](#) [health](#) [training](#)



Q: I have a 3-year-old German shepherd who barks at meter readers, the mailman, loud trucks and people walking down the street. How can I curtail the barking?

B. T., Cyberspace

A: Veterinary behaviorist Dr. R. K. Anderson, professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, says your dog is anxious, and perhaps fearful. When your dog barks excessively, of course the loud trucks and the mail carrier continue on their way. From your dog's perspective, "I bark, and the threat or worry goes away." There's not much you can do to prevent trucks from driving by, and mail carriers can't stop and pet dogs who appear to be a threat. However, with some management and training, the problem is fixable.

For starters, when indoors - where your dog has no anxiety issues - teach her to watch you. Feed her by hand, keeping the kibble up near your face. Say, "Watch me" and she will do just that. Over time, begin to use the command without food, except to intermittently reinforce. Now take the command outside, but away from mail carriers, trucks and anything that may set off the barking.

Add a kind of head halter called a Gentle Leader for walks. Anderson knows about this device; he's the co-inventor. Using a Gentle Leader, you have some control over the dog's head, so as she approaches the meter reader, you can pull the head up in your direction as you use the "watch me" command. If she's watching you (the idea is to learn to watch you for direction) and munching on treats (which you're copiously supplying), she's not barking. Also, the Gentle Leader has a relaxing effect on many dogs.

Learn more about this type of behavior and other behavior problems on Anderson's non-profit [Animal Behavior Institute Web site](#).

Source URL (retrieved on 05/28/2013 - 12:08): <http://www.webvet.com/main/2008/05/29/curbing-your-dogs-barking>