



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

## Canine Master on Pet Life Radio - Episode #3 Summer Safety Tips and Nuisance Barking

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Hi, I'm Chris Onthank and welcome to the Canine Master Radio Show here on Pet Life Radio. Today, we're going to talk about some summer safety tips for your dogs. You know, every year, dogs are dying or getting injured from the heat and from the hot pavement. So we're going to talk a bit about that and what you might do to prevent that from happening. The other thing we're going to talk about today is that crazy nuisance barking that drives everybody nuts. Dogs bark for a variety of reasons, whether they're bored, whether they're lonely, whether they're trying to communicate long-distance with another canine companion. Dogs bark for many reasons, and we're going to talk about how we might eliminate some of the nuisance barking that drives you and perhaps your neighbors crazy. We have a lot to talk about today.

Summer's still here and let's get outside and have some fun with our dogs, but we got to take precautions with our dogs with dog safety. A couple of things that I see every year in my own practice. I hear about dogs getting sick from the heat, dying from the heat, getting injured from the heat. I had a client last year who left her dog in the car just to go into a store for a brief moment and when she came back out, it was almost like a riot around her. They had animal control called. There were about 15 people standing around her, screaming at her that she had done animal cruelty. I love this kind of thing because dogs do die every year in the car.

A little bit over 60 degrees, just 60 degrees outside, put your dog in a car, roll up the windows, you're going to go into the store for 15 minutes and you know what? Dogs die from that. I had a Bernese Mountain dog that I took care of and raised from a puppy, gave it to a client of mine. When the dog was a year and a half old... The dog's name was Melody. Melody was in the car for literally 10 minutes when she went into a CVS Pharmacy. She came out. It was only 60 degrees, mind you. She came out and the dog was in a mad heatstroke, panting, and the dog died from the heat.

So the temperatures rise incredibly quickly. Cracking those windows just a little bit in the sides is not good to do it. It won't because the heat can't evaporate fast enough. How does your dog breathe? How does your dog cool down? Well, it cools down through breathing

but if it's bringing in temperatures of 80, 90, 100 degrees very quickly it rises in that car, you're going to find that your dog is going to be in big trouble real quick. So, what do you do? Well, if you absolutely have to take your dog out on a hot day, keep the air conditioning going. And you better supervise it and make sure you've got enough gas going. Make sure your car doesn't shut off and check on your dog frequently. I really recommend against that.

There's a new law in Tennessee that if you find a dog and a car and it looks like the windows are up and there's nothing going on, the dog can't get out, the dog looks like it's stressing, you can actually break into that car without being punished by law. So the state of Tennessee now allows you to do that. That's awesome. I'm going to tell you a little story about my wife, Hillary. Hillary did something very heroic about, I don't know, four years ago. There was a man that pulled into the parking lot where our canine center is. When she got out of the car, she saw that there was a dog, it was a beagle, and it was inside the car. The windows were all up and the car was off, and the dog seemed like it was overheating, panting, panting, panting.

So my wife being a big animal lover, dog lover, started getting very upset. She started running around the parking lot. "Whose dog is this? Whose is this?" She's running around at different stores trying to find who was the owner of this dog and this car? She finally went and got a brick, and she broke the window and opened up the door and took the dog out. Well, about 10 minutes later, a man came out and said, "What's going on? My car." My wife, Hillary said, "You know what? This is crazy. You had your dog locked in the car. I was panicked. There was no air." He reached over and he said, "But the sunroof was open." Anyway, probably wasn't enough even with a sunroof open, but it was a pretty funny story. We ended up having to pay for the car to be fixed.

But the best way is, again, to leave your dog at home or even take them to like a doggy daycare during the day if you got to get an exercise. Starting out in the middle of the morning, doing exercise in the morning. At the end of the day when it's cooler is fine. But you've got to be careful even when you're walking your dog at those times. I tell people, "You got to take your dog out to go to the bathroom? Put the back of your hand on the black pavement. If you can't keep your hand there to the count of five, what do you think going to do to your dog's feet?"

Last week, a client came up to me and said... I said, "What's wrong with your dog?" Paws are in bandages. She said, "Chris, I walked my dog on the pavement, and he got blisters all over his pads." So walk your dog early on the day, late in the day. Try the test. Put the back of your hand on the pavement. If you can't keep it there for five seconds, take it away. Don't have your dog on the pavement at all in that situation. Walk your dog on the grass.

How many times do we see dogs get dehydrated? Make sure your dog has plenty of water. Even if he's outside, don't over-exercise your dog during the day. How many people go out there and throw the ball for their dogs? If that tongue goes out to the side, the dog starts panting, he's excessively panting, he's having difficulty breathing, he's drooling. Boy, you've just made a mistake. Put that dog back inside into a cool environment. You might even try putting some... What I do when I see a dog that's overheated, and I have seen them, I'll actually take a cool washcloth and wipe down that stomach area and the pads of the paws. You'll find that actually will cool the dog down quickly.

The idea is you want to get your dog cooled down. If the dog looks like it's in a drunken stupor about to collapse, your dog is suffering from heat exposure and we got to really get that dog cool and perhaps to a vet, probably to a vet right away. I wouldn't even mess around. Dogs like pugs and bulldogs, those dogs that looked like they ran into too many parked cars. Those are the dogs that are more susceptible to heat exhaustion and problems with all the heat out there. "So, what do I do?" Get your dog some water. Cool your dog down. Get them to a vet if he's showing symptoms of drooling, and panting, and drunken stupor. And the best thing is keep your dog inside during those hot, hot days.

Another thing that happens in the summertime, we're a big advocate at my canine center of teaching dogs how to swim. Did you know that tragically, every year a dog will fall into a pool? We see hundreds of dogs that fall into pools and they drowned. "Oh, don't all dogs know how to swim?" No, they do not. There are many breeds that have no idea how to swim. I've even seen Labrador retrievers that instinctively didn't know how to swim. So teaching your dog how to swim is a really smart thing to do. Go in, find a facility that maybe has a pool, which we do at our facility in Connecticut. But I will tell you, there's a lot of facilities out there that are adding pools to their doggy daycares and boarding facilities. Do a swim lesson. Get your dog in a pool.

If you're going to go swimming yourself, put on a sweatshirt or even a wetsuit, and then put a life jacket on your dog. That'll help manipulate it. The reason why I say the wetsuit is that actually protects your skin from being ripped to shreds by their paws. I like to teach a puppy, put him in the pool, see how they know how to swim, and then I got to teach them how to get out of the pool. So once I see that my dog is swimming, I really need to make sure that they know how to get out, where the stairs are. At the level of when a dog's in a pool, everything kind of looks the same. So finding where the stairs are can be very difficult.

What I do to find out where stairs are, I'll sometimes put up a big plant or a planter or a statue by the stairs. And that way when the dog's in the water, from his viewpoint, he can see where the stairs are. I show them over and over and over, put him in the pool, how to get out, put him in the pool, how to get out. This is a great way because if your dog ever accidentally falls in the pool, he's going to know how to get himself out and you're going to save your dog's life.

All right, we want to talk about that barking, barking. Gosh, I hear about customers coming to me all the time saying, "How do I stop my dog from barking? I'm about to be evicted from my apartment. Please help me." There's a lot of reasons why dogs bark and many dogs bark for different reasons, whether it's protective barking, whether it's boredom, whether it's I want to communicate with my buddies far away. Let's talk about why dogs bark. Anybody ever hear the... the howl? Guess what? Your dog is trying to communicate with another dog far away.

I'll hear dogs do howling when they hear a siren from a fire truck or a police car. But I'll also hear dogs howl when they hear another dog howl. That's what we call long-range communication. We'll also hear dogs barking because they're bored. You put them outside, dog is all alone. Dogs don't like to be alone. They're pack animals. They like to be with other dogs and people. So a dog will bark sometimes out of boredom. The other reasons that dogs bark is that they bark because they're being pushy. They're barking at you. "I want to

go outside... Ruff ruff, I want to play ball..." Bark at you, and you'll see those. That's that kind of barking.

Then, there's also the type of barking where the dog is barking because he's all alone. Again, that's boredom, but maybe it's separation anxiety. The final reason that I see dogs bark is for protectiveness or because they're saying, "Stay away. This is my territory. Ruff, ruff, ruff. I hear this." Which we call the reactive barker. So all the dogs communicating different ways. Of course, growling... is used for threatening. We're not going to really talk about how to stop a dog from growling here. That's more of a feeling. Then I get those dogs that sort of grunt... They get all excited when I come home. Again, we're not going to talk about that barking again.

So how do I stop a dog from barking because he's bored? Well, try getting a Kong. Everybody know what a Kong is? One of the best pet products ever made. Get yourself a rubber Kong, fill it with peanut butter and cookies or even a little bit of his dog food, stick it in the freezer overnight. You take it out in the morning, give it to your dog and let him work on it all day long. They also have those toys that reinforced your dog on a variable schedule of reinforcement where the treats come out haphazardly. Those cubes, you can go to your local pet store and get one that's a self-reinforcer that keeps your dog occupied during the day.

Exercising your dog, gosh, how did I forget about that? Exercising your dog every morning before you leave will really help your dog be more relaxed when he's at home. You might also try putting all your dog crates and dog beds in corners out of the way underneath things. I always recommend doing that anyway so that your dog has sort of a den so he can sort of relax when you're not there. This all helps with boredom barking.

Now let's talk about the reactive dog. The reactive dog is...ruff, ruff, ruff Every time somebody walks by your house, everything that moves, every sound, your dog is reactive barking. In apartment buildings, this can become a real, huge issue for your neighbors and get you evicted very quickly out of your apartment building or your dog, at least. So, how do I stop a dog that is reactive barking? Well, one of the things that we need to do is we need to become dominant in the space. Many people would say, "Go and get a squirt water bottle or something." That's only going to be a bandaid to the cause of the barking. When we deal with barking, we got to get to the cause. Why is it that your dog is barking?

Well, when your dog is barking because he's hearing a noise, he's barking because he thinks he's in charge. He thinks he's in charge of the space. He thinks he's in charge of the interactions. So what you're going to do in that case is you're going to become more dominant in the space. First of all, start winning your elevated areas. If you have a reactive dog that's barking all the time, get them off the couch, the chairs, the furniture, the stair landings, and the top of the stairs. That's the first thing. That's going to help a lot because elevation literally means status. The higher up they are, the more dominant they are. So the leaders will always roost above the rest of the pack sort of like a lookout. So if your dog is sitting there at the top of your couch looking over the backyard, he is going to be a reactive dog. He's going to bark at everything and every sound that he hears.

The next thing is, is start being more dominant in the space. Now, this sounds kind of cruel, but it's not. Moving your dog, walking through your dog, not in a mean way, just walking through them, forward body pressure, and walking through them using your legs. Many times that will make the dogs start to relax and calm down. If I have a dog that's barking, barking, barking, barking, never kick your dog or hurt your dog, but I'm going to actually gently nudge my dog with my feet with forward body pressure and I'm going to move him, move him, move him, move him till he relaxes. Very quickly, you're getting to the cause. The cause is he thinks he's in charge. But when you are dominant in a space, your dog will relax. This technique gets to the crux of the problem and it's not a bandaid. It actually fixes why your dog is doing the barking in the first place.

Has everybody ever seen the movie, The Wizard of Oz? Of course, many of us have. Dogs like this is what I call Wizard of Oz syndrome. It's usually the fearful dog that is the most barks. It's not the confident dog. The confident dogs will sit back and relax, but the fearful dog will be very reactive. We all remember when Toto ran behind the big screen or that fire screen from the wizard. Toto went behind and found the Wizard of Oz and that small little booth. And Dorothy went, "How dare you? You scared my little dog." He was just a scared wizard putting up that big front so that nobody would go behind the curtain to see that he was just a scared old man. So I say a lot of these dogs have what we call Wizard of Oz syndrome. So dogs bark when they think they're in charge.

So if we can really make sure we are in charge of all the decisions, we determine who's friendly or foe, you're going to find that your dog becomes less reactive. One other thing is if I'm walking down the street and I have a dog that barks on leash, put the dog behind you. That works incredibly well. So the reactive dog is gonna be much better if we get to the crux of the problem by being dominant in the space and taking over the interactions.

How about the dog that barks at you to start and end interactions? He barks at you because he wants to be fed. He barks at you because he wants to go outside. He barks at you because he wants to play. He nudges you and barks at you because he wants to be pet. Boy, this can be a real pain in the rear. What I do in those situations is, again, you need to be dominant and in charge of the interactions. If I have a dog that comes and starts barking at me, forward body pressure, and literally like a linebacker, you're not hurting your dog, but forward body pressure and move into your dog, moving them away from you about six to eight feet. Do this over and over again and pretty soon, your dog's got to realize, "You know what? I can't do that anymore, and it doesn't work." So, again, starting and ending those interactions with a dog who's being pushy.

Okay, so how about the dog that wants to alert you? All right, it's fine. It's good for dogs to alert you. But once you go and meet the person at the door, your dog should let you take charge. Get that dog behind you and all of a sudden, your dogs will be much less reactive.

Okay, we now have some questions from our listeners. Please remember you can always email or find... When you go to [caninemaster.com](http://caninemaster.com), you can ask questions, ask the trainer, and pose your questions right there and I'm going to hopefully be able to answer them on the radio. All right, I'm here with Jaimee. Jaimee, what questions do we have today from our listeners?

**Jaimee:** Okay. Our first question is about dogs barking in the crate. She says, "My dog only barks in crate and I don't know what to do. Could it be separation anxiety? Please help."

**Chris:** All right, that's a good question. How many people inadvertently reinforce barking when their dog is in the crate barking? There's a couple of different ways to correct this. But many of us reinforce it without us even knowing. So I have a dog and he's barking, barking, barking, barking, and I try to use what we call the behaviorism extinction. Extinction is where we actually ignore the behavior and hopefully it will go away. So what many people do is they start hearing their dog bark. They wait for that quiet moment and then let the dog out. But the dog keeps on barking, and they go five minutes, 10 minutes. And before you know it, it's 10 minutes, 15 minutes, and then they go, "Oh, I can't stand it anymore." And then they walk back and they let the dog out.

You know what they just taught that dog? They just taught the dog that, "As long as I bark and I have to bark for at least 15 to 20 minutes, you'll finally let me out." So if you're going to use the extinction technique, you need to go get yourself some earplugs. You need to make sure that you wait it out or else extinction won't work. We know about the B.F. Skinner box and hitting the lever. So the rat would hit the lever and then when the reinforcement no longer came, it took a while for that rat to stop hitting the lever.

So what I would try doing is trying extinction. You can also try putting a big towel or a blanket over the crate and putting the dog in the darkness. So what I do is dogs barking and I'll say, "Quiet," and I'll put him in complete darkness. When the dog's quiet, I'll then lift open the blanket in the front so that the dog is getting rewarded. Now he can see, and then I let him out. Never let your dog out of the crate when he's still barking. Make sure you wait for that time and that should work for you. What other questions do we have, Jamie?

**Jaimee:** Okay, great. Our next question reads, "I have always had large dogs, but I'm now getting older and traveling more. I would like to get a smaller dog but I'm hesitant because they have a reputation of being yappy. Why is this, and is it true?"

**Chris:** Well, a couple of reasons why I think there's that reputation. First of all, dogs tend to be more yappy... We talked about elevation a little bit earlier in the show. So if I'm always picking up my dogs, I'm putting that dog into more of a leadership role. If I let the dog up on the furniture, most people love to have their small dogs, including myself, up on the furniture, that's going to make your dog more yappy. So if you're really concerned about having that yappy dog, I would invite my dog up on invitation only and not that it's expected to hang out on those elevated areas. I also would try to keep my dog on all four paws on the ground as much as possible.

Again, the more times you elevate them, the more times they feel in charge. And if they're not a confident dog, they're going to get that Wizard of Oz syndrome and they're going to start barking and being reactive. So keeping your dog on the floor more often with a small dog is going to really help. Then, of course, we see how many people baby their small dogs. It's not that it's bad to baby your dog. I baby my dog Dave all the time. But I can't tell you how many people who literally baby their dogs to extremes, the small ones especially. They treat them like they're their babies.

These little pocket dogs that everybody has in their bags. Literally the dogs are so demanding, get what they want. These dogs are running these people's lives. "Oh, I think he needs to go outside. Oh, I think he needs a toy. Oh, he's barking at me now for this and barking at me now for that." So small dogs, people tend to anthropomorphize, give those human emotions to their dogs. They don't treat them like dogs. They treat them more like people. Many times, this can lead to what we call a kind of a spoiled dog that barks and gets everything he wants. So try to treat them a little bit more like a dog. Not saying not to cuddle them, and love them, and have fun with them. But a little bit less like a person, a little bit more like a dog is probably going to help you with a smaller dog and stop that yappy behavior.

My dog, Dave, we invite an invitation only up onto elevated areas. We don't carry Dave around, even though he's probably about 20 pounds. Maybe he's 25 pounds now, and he got a little bit bigger. I got to take some weight off of Dave. But my point is he's not yappy, and he's not yappy because I treat him like a dog and not like a person. Okay. What else do we have, Jaimee?

**Jaimee:** Okay, our next question. "My dog barks all day long. My neighbors in my complex are complaining. I'm nervous I might be evicted. What can I do?"

**Chris:** Okay. Well, I think I kind of touched on this a little bit before. But a lot of times dogs are barking because they're lonely. They're all by themselves. So that Kong solution I just talked about would be really helpful in that or those toys that reward on a variable schedule of reinforcement can be addicting. I would also say that putting... Let's go back. Let me just give you a little more information on the crates and beds. Creating dens for your dogs, not putting your crate by the front door, the back door, in the mudroom. If I put my dog in the mudroom, I'm putting him by the entrance to the house or the apartment or the foyer, for instance, so that also is not a good place for crates. Keep crates underneath things and in corners out of the way and not near entrances. That's going to make your dog less reactive.

Let's talk about those bark collars or the citronella collars. I see this happening all the time. People go, "Well, Chris, can I get a bark collar, electric collar, put it on my dog?" Well, do they work? Yeah, they can work. I can tell you though, I've seen so much psychological damage done by bark collars. How many of you out there are using that electric underground fence? How many where the dog is getting shocked? He learns that, "If I get shocked, I can't go there." Okay, let's say we use an electric bark collar on a dog that has an underground electric fence.

Well, how are they going to differentiate between being shocked for, "I can't go there," and, "You're not supposed to say anything and be quiet." A lot of times, dogs get very confused by the shock, don't know where it's coming from. It causes a lot more anxiety in the dogs. So all of a sudden, the dog goes woof, and he gets shocked. Woof, and he gets... All of a sudden, that dog has no idea why he's getting shocked and he's getting more anxiety and he's freaking out, and he becomes more reactive and more fearful and more barksy. So the electric collar, the shock collar, although I have seen it work on occasion, is generally not a good idea. Especially if I have an underground fence system or I have a dog that's very sensitive.

How about the citronellas? Okay, there citronella collar is where it's a spray of citronella that goes into the dog's face and the dog is supposed to understand that that shoot of the spray comes when he barks. The problem I have seen with these collars is that the citronella spray comes after the bark, so the timing is a little bit off. Years ago, when I was taking dogs into my own home and boarding them, we put a citronella collar on a dog that was barking like crazy. What happened was the dog started getting sick from the citronella. He didn't put two and two together. When the dog barked, it went ruff, and then he got sprayed with the citronella. He didn't put two and two together, and he just kept on barking. It did not work. So I will tell you that the timing of the citronella spray is a little bit delayed and I find a lot of confusion in that.

Again, these are bandaids, these are bandaids to why the dog is barking. If the dog is barking out of boredom, get him exercise. Do things to make sure that he's occupied during the day. The other thing is if your dog is barking because he's lonely or he has separation anxiety, I just gave you the ideas of putting dogs in crates and underneath things and in dog beds. And then if the dog is being reactive, again, what you want to do is become more dominant in the space. You're going to find that those get to the crux of why the dog is barking and not because it's not fixing the problem. You had a question. I thought about a mailman.

**Jaimee:** Yeah. A question is that, "My dog, no matter what I do, my dog just barks at that mailman every day like it's his job and I don't know how to stop it."

**Chris:** All right, well that's a really funny... That's what I called a mailman syndrome. We see this with UPS too. Think about it from your dog's perspective. The mailman comes, he drops the mail through the door slot, the dog barks woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, and then the mailman runs away. Or the UPS man comes, the dog barks, he drops the package, and then the UPS man hops back in his truck, and drives away. We see this all the time. So, actually, it's reinforced barking. The dog is going, "Wow, I just push that guy off. Look how powerful I am." And over and over and over again. So that's why we get that mailman syndrome. People wonder why that happens. That's exactly why it happens.

So what I would do is why not get your mailman or your UPS driver to be a little bit more of the fix? Give them some treats and say... Every time the mailman comes, have the mailman give him a treat. Then, all of a sudden, it's not somebody to scare away. It's actually somebody he wants to come in and is happy to see. Most mailman and UPS, whether DHL or whatever the carrier, you will find that they are very happy to cooperate because they don't want the dog getting all aggressive towards them and seeing them as a bad guy. So that actually works really well.

So I think that's about it for today. I want to tell you a little bit about what we are going to talk about next week, separation anxiety, separation anxiety. We touched a little bit on it today but separation anxiety is a huge problem with many people with their dogs. Destruction, people get their dogs to tear up their house, poop, and pee all over the place. So next time on Canine Master, you are going to hear a lot about how we fix that separation anxiety.



So send me your videos and your photos so I can see what's going on with your dog, and I can help you master the solution with Canine Master Radio. Also, visit me on [caninemaster.com](http://caninemaster.com). That's C-A-N-I-N-E Master.com. Click on the link, Ask the Canine Master, and leave your questions for me and I'll do my best to get back to you. I may even have you call into the show with your questions. Take care and I'll see you next time.