

Preventing Separation Anxiety Related Behavior Issues

How to Help Your Dog Cope With Being Alone

Many dogs experience some degree of difficulty being left alone. They may need help learning that it's not so scary. To set your dog up to be calm when you are gone, start by only leaving them alone for short periods of time until you know they aren't going to panic.

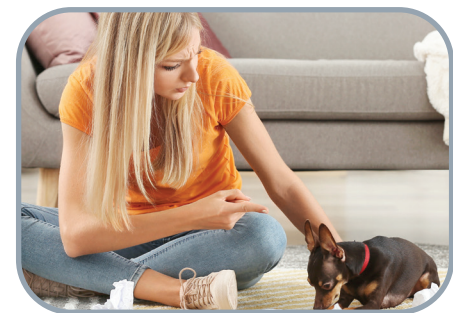
- Observe your dog via live video. This is key to understanding how they react. Use any video program on a laptop or tablet, such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. Open the program on your device and also the app on your smartphone.
- Keep the initial absence short (2-5 minutes max) and observe your dog's behavior.
- If you see signs of stress, return immediately. These may include (but are not limited to): pacing, panting, vocalizing, drooling, and scratching or pawing at the door.
- If your dog appears to be comfortable with a five minute absence, gradually start increasing the time you are away.

If you plan to use a crate or confinement area, be sure that your dog is relaxed in this space before you leave him alone.



DOS:

- Provide daily exercise and enrichment in the form of training, treat dispensing toys, or chews. Providing affection and attention does not cause separation anxiety.
- Utilize a reliable daycare or pet sitter when you need to be away for longer than your dog is comfortable.



DON'TS:

- Don't punish your dog for something he did while you were gone.
- Don't use equipment that might be painful or scary.
- Never leave your dog in a crate until he is fully trained to be calm there.
- Never leave your dog alone for longer than he is comfortable. He will not just "get over it."

If your dog is experiencing symptoms of separation anxiety, don't despair!

If your dog is showing signs of stress when left alone, contact your veterinarian and a professional dog trainer who specializes in helping dogs with separation anxiety.

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