

SEPARATION ANXIETY

NO MORE™



Sarah
Richards

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My Story

At the time of this writing, I have a 20-month-old German shepherd, Peter. Peter is a very adorable pet that has become an integral part of my family. Every member in the house absolutely loves him. Since he's come into our lives, we have actually gotten a valuable family member who loves without judgment, has no inhibitions and expects nothing in return. Yes, all he wants is love ... and just love!

We actually inherited him from an ex-neighbor whose dog had given birth two years ago. We brought him home as an adorable 2-month-old puppy who was ever-so energetic and entertaining at his best.

However, when he was 8-months old I landed a job at an ad agency and was often working more than nine hours a day. With my husband and kids both out of the house for work and school respectively, Peter was usually at home alone. We were sometimes able to get a neighbor to check in on him from time to time.

Gradually, he started resenting being left alone at home and would whine incessantly the minute he saw me getting ready for work. He even resisted my neighbor when she used to give him his regular meals as he would often leave it untouched.

Since we generally let him roam the house, he began to destroy everything in sight. Even after dog-proofing the house, he still managed to find something to get into.

We built a kennel for him that was wired to keep him inside when we were out, but with time he even bent the wires, and whined all the time when he was in it.

Matters became worse when he broke one of his teeth, and broke the metal welding on the kennel to the point that he could escape with it being closed. Since he literally destroyed the kennel, we threw it out and let him roam the house again. Once again, he began to destroy the house.

After doing some research, I realized that he was suffering from a condition called "separation anxiety". We put him on medication for the separation anxiety and it appeared to have helped for a while. I tried to get a dog trainer, but he told me to retry the crating which did not help much. I later realized that crating should have been performed long before his ailment.

I gradually took him for 30 to 45 minute daily walks before I left him, filled up two Kongs with peanut butter, and gave him a bone that would keep him full and entertained. Gradually, I tried crate-training again and gave him his food in the crate, and he started voluntarily going into the crate with his bowl of food with a satisfied, but half-hearted smile.

We left the crate open for him and whenever he wanted to go into the crate when we left the house he could, but he could also roam about if he chose to do so. I did not want to crate him for the rest of his life while we were at work though, and I also didn't want him to stay on medication forever either.

I started reading more about separation anxiety and discovered many methods to help Peter. Much to my amazement, there were a lot of other people with dogs suffering from the same disorder, but there was very little information available on the subject.

Dog owners have the misconception that they have a 'bad dog' when in actuality, their pet may be suffering from separation anxiety - which can be cured!

I decided to help my fellow dog lovers, by finding out everything I could on the subject and making it available in one place. This book represents the culmination of my efforts to achieve this goal.

I hope this manual will be of help to you and your pet, and that it will provide the best information available on dog separation anxiety.

May this book help you to regain the composure and calm your household is craving!

My best to you,

Stephanie Abel

Chapter 1

Our Pet's Emotions

Most of us who nurture family pets, know exactly how they behave when they try to express their emotions. They may not always howl or growl to get things done, but body language and gestures are more than enough to give an idea of their needs.

However, we need to tune in our minds to differentiate between positive and negative emotional expressions. For that, let us list some common emotions seen in pets and their expressions therein:

Happy



Key features of a happy dog are:

- Ears perked up and forward
- Eyes wide open
- Mouth relaxed and slightly opened and teeth covered
- Body and tail relaxed

A happy dog does not attempt to look one in the eye and will probably go through the typical sniffing pattern.

It is advisable to offer the dog the back of one's wrist to smell before attempting to pet it.



Submissive

This includes both "active" and "passive" submissive postures.

Passive submission: *This is when the dog lays down on its back, belly up. It is a pacifying gesture that is offered to a more dominant individual (the owner or a close family member). The dog appears to want to have its belly rubbed in this position. Key features of this behavior are:*

- *Ears back*
- *Exposed belly*
- *Tail tucked in*
- *Head turned away with an indirect gaze.*

Active submission: *A pacifying pose when the dog acknowledges another dog or human's higher ranking, or to inhibit another dog's aggression. The key features are:*

- *Ears back*
- *Tail hung low, wagging slowly*
- *One paw raised*
- *Eyes half closed*
- *Mouth nearly closed with just the tip of the tongue darting out.*



Aggressive!

Aggression in dogs includes "defensive aggressive" behavior in addition to becoming aggressive.

In a defensive aggressive posture, a dog is fearful and is giving warning signals to indicate that it does not want to be approached, but if it is, it will attack to protect itself. The key features of this pose are:

- Ears back*
- Pupils dilated*
- Mouth is tense, wrinkled and snarling with exposed teeth*
- Tail is down and tense*
- Posture is mildly crouched with the weight over rear legs.*

Aggressive behavior is indicated by: *open snarling mouth with exposed teeth; ears up with tail up and tense; eyes making direct contact; and growling.*



Playful

Playfulness is the body language a dog expresses when trying to initiate play. It bows down in front, which is a combination of submissive and dominant gestures. This stance is offered to invite another (dog or human) to play or as part of a courtship behavior. Identifying features are:

- *Front end of dog lowered, as if ready to leap forward;*
- *Mouth open and relaxed with tongue exposed*

- Why are we concentrating so much on these gestures?
- What has it got to do with separation anxiety in dogs?

For starters, getting used to common gestures and body language is essential to gauge what a pet wants to express, especially for a person who has newly acquired a pet. It is very important to understand day-to-day expressions of emotions in our pets. This will help you to differentiate abnormal activity or behavior from normal expressions.

In the next chapter, we will formally introduce separation anxiety in dogs and get a basic understanding of its implications.

Chapter 2

What Is Dog Separation Anxiety?

Separation anxiety is a critical behavioral problem, which can cause tremendous emotional distress for both dogs and their owners. It can occur in dogs of any age or breed, and is one of the most common reasons for pet owners to euthanize or give up their dogs.

Most dogs with normal behavior characteristically sleep, bark randomly or chew their toys when left alone in the house or in a room without access to its owner. In general, they pretty much do what they normally do when you are with them. For dogs with separation anxiety, they can make leaving the house or even the room an emotional hitch and a difficult task for its owner. Separation anxiety can cause dogs to:

- whine or bark incessantly
- pace, chew furniture, destroy blinds, rip up carpeting, eat through drywall, climb bookcases, mutilate plants or scratch at windows and doors

Dogs with severe separation anxiety can destroy thousands of dollars in internal furnishings, go through plate glass windows injuring themselves, bloody their mouths and paws and defecate and urinate (eliminate) everywhere. Their howling, barking and whining can also lead to problems with neighbors and landlords.

What Are The Main Causes Of Separation Anxiety?

It is not fully understood exactly why some dogs suffer from separation anxiety and, under similar circumstances, others don't. Separation anxiety can be seen in animals from multiple or single-pet homes. It may be more likely to occur in animals with a history of abuse or of multiple homes. Dogs that have missed out on normal social interaction with people or other animals, especially as puppies, may also be at increased risk.

Separation anxiety typically occurs in the following cases:

- A dog has never or rarely been left alone or the ones that were not properly integrated into their first home and got relegated to a basement, garage or yard.
- Dogs who were removed from their mother and littermates too early (prior to 8 weeks of age) or too late (after 14 weeks).
- Following a long interval, such as a vacation where the owner and dog were constantly together.
- After a traumatic event (from the dog's point of view) such as a period of time spent at a shelter or boarding kennel, or an event that occurred which was a significantly frightening experience for your dog.
- A dog that has never had a prior problem may develop separation anxiety when there is a change in the owner's work schedule.
- A dog that is getting quite old.

- It could be the result of changes in the family's routine or structure, such as:
 - ❖ A child leaving for boarding school or college;
 - ❖ A change in work schedules;
 - ❖ The household has moved to a new home; or
 - ❖ A new pet or person comes into the home.
- Dogs that have been abandoned at key points in their psychological development.
- Time spent at the veterinary clinic.

Experts also agree that separation anxiety is a panic reaction, and definitely not an attempt by the dog to "spite" their owners

It is important to realize, that the destruction and house soiling that often occurs with separation anxiety is not the dog's attempt to punish or seek revenge on its owner for being left alone, but rather is actually part of a panic response.

One has to understand that dogs are pack animals. It is natural that they would wish to be with people all the time. Most adult dogs (12-16 months and older depending on breed) can be left alone for 8 hours or even longer if they have access to a yard for elimination. They may be unhappy, or they could be bored but they don't create major destructive problems for their owners.

A dog with separation anxiety is different.

When you go to the door to leave, does your dog become anxious and try to leave with you? Do you manage to get outside and close the door but you can still hear your dog

whining and scratching on the inside? Such situations cause you to be upset, your dog to be upset, and you do not know what you will find when you return. When you return to find your house in a shambles, do you get upset at your dog which causes it to become even more upset? If so, this cycle repeats and builds upon itself until you are ready to give your dog away.

Signs of distress that occur only when your dog does not have access to you give a clear indication of separation anxiety. This anxiety usually begins when your dog thinks you are getting ready to leave. It can be exhibited if you put your dog in a room and close the door behind you. If your dog is anxious and distressed all the time, you need to look for another underlying cause.

Separation anxiety is not affected by whether the owner is loving and attentive or not. Two dogs of the same breed living with the same owner may exhibit completely different behaviors. One dog can whine, pace and bark while the other will lie down and go to sleep.

Like many human behaviors, it could be caused by brain chemistry. A dog that is genetically predisposed may have the condition triggered by stress. Some breeds have a greater tendency to suffer from separation anxiety. It is worth doing some research into your dog's breed(s) to help you localize the problem. Some breeds are genetically predisposed to separation anxiety. They are identified typically as:

- Weimaraners
- Springer Spaniels
- Airedales
- German Shepherds

Separation anxiety often plagues dogs in what behaviorist, Larry Lachman, terms a "triangled" situation wherein a dog is used as an emotional replacement for someone else in the family. The excessive attention and touching common in such relationships can result in overdependence, which can lead to a dog's inability to cope with the departure and/or absence of its special person.

Even when not in such a dysfunctional relationship, dogs can develop anxiety responses due to people lavishing too much attention on them, for example constant petting and rubbing, constant chatter or too much lap time. This creates a super-needy dog who cannot occupy itself or even stand to be alone.

It is important for owners of dogs with separation anxiety to understand that the inappropriate behavior the dog is exhibiting is due to anxiety, and not because the dog is angry or trying to 'get back' at the owner. Scolding or punishing the dog will only lead to confusion, more anxiety, and worse behavior. Upon videotaping dogs whose owners have punished the dog for its destructive behavior, it has demonstrated that the dog's anxiety level increases just before the owner would normally come home. In these cases, behaviorists feel the dog's problem behavior is not due to anxiety about being alone, but because the dog is anxious about the probable punishment it will receive when the owner returns.

When It Is Not Separation Anxiety!

Sometimes tearing the drywall, eating the baseboard, raiding the cupboards is not separation anxiety, it is simply bad behavior or your dog having a delightful time when you are not home to correct it. Like teenagers having a secret party when their parents are away for the weekend, some dogs have learned that they can have a great deal of fun when their owner is gone.

In order to find out what is really happening when you are away, set up a video camera and see how your dog behaves. Does your dog look happy with an open, relaxed mouth and relaxed body? Does your dog look anxious, upset, angry or tense?

If you do not have a video camera, you can leave and then walk back quietly to your house and take a look inside. You may find out that your dog is simply in need of training and more toys.

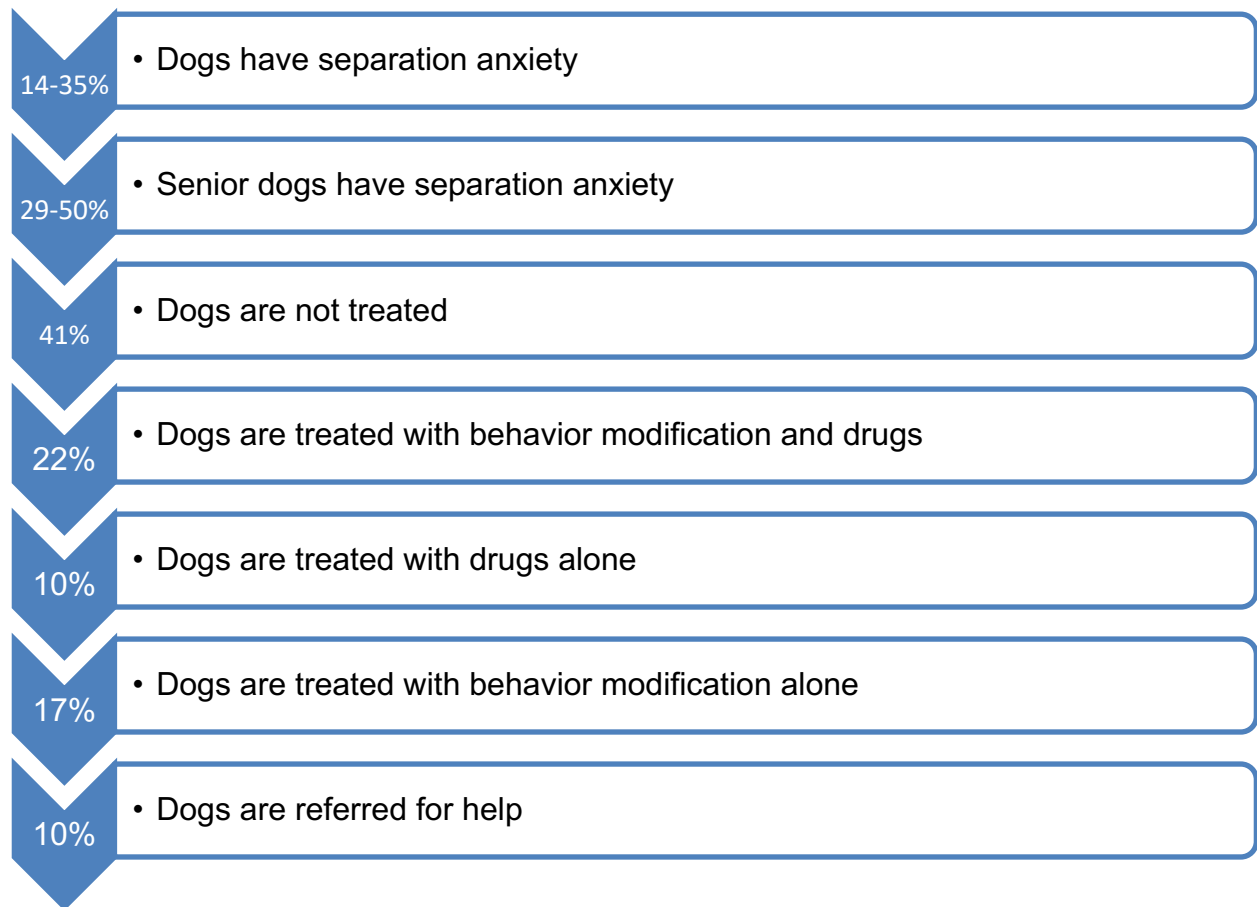
Such measures will help one really differentiate between a healthy dog and one that suffers from separation anxiety

Additional Information And Statistics

If separation anxiety persists as a dog grows up to adult hood, they have a dysfunctional attachment. In a chronic stressful state, we know that dogs have a higher prolactin level. In an acute stressful state, we know that dogs have a lower prolactin level.

A dog in chronic stress is a completely different animal. They will display behaviors that may be completely out of line with their regular temperament. It is important to remember that they are not acting in this manner deliberately to 'spite' you. They are acting in accordance with their stressed state.

Separation Anxiety Statistics



Reference: www.dogpsychologyhelp.com

Separation anxiety, when left untreated, significantly affects the dog/human bond. It leads to a greater number of dogs being relinquished to shelters or euthanized due to destructive behavior. The welfare of dogs with separation anxiety is at great risk. I am sure none of you who are reading this want to expose your pet to such an unfortunate situation. That is why I wrote this book for pet owners who are caring enough to give their pet relationship the best shot!

The next chapter will help one detect separation anxiety by understanding the symptoms and signs attached to it!

Chapter 3

Detecting Separation Anxiety - Signs & Symptoms

The occurrence of separation anxiety in dogs is well documented as it relates to humans. This common anxiety disorder occurs most often in young puppies just as it occurs in babies and toddlers of humans. Many mental health professionals consider instances of this behavior in very young puppies to be normal behavior. When the disorder strikes older dogs, it may be a sign of alarm.

It is very common for very young puppies to feel anxious or abandoned when their humans are away. Having broken the maternal bonds that developed between their mother and littermates, young pups are in the middle of a very critical transition period. If they have received the proper training and finally bonded to their owners, most dogs settle into a normal routine.

A dog with separation anxiety becomes abnormally anxious when separated from its owner. Playing with a favorite toy may no longer interest the dog. Owners often blame themselves, or worse, take it out on the dog. Lack of proper training or inattention by the owner may manifest itself in the dog constantly acting out.

The severity of the anxiety and the behaviors that the dog exhibits vary from case-to-case:

- Some dogs become anxious if they cannot actually see their owner; they constantly follow the owner from room to room.

- Other dogs can tolerate being alone in a room but will check frequently to reassure themselves that the owner is still in the house, and then go back to their previous activity.
- Other dogs do not become anxious until the owner actually leaves the home.
- Some dogs have a period of time during which they are comfortable alone, but they become anxious if the owner is gone for an extended period.

This anxiety often increases the longer the owner is gone, and can result in behaviors such as:

Whining, barking
and howling

Pacing and
hyperactivity

Excessive salivation

Scratching, chewing
and digging

Urinating or
defecating

Destruction of
personal items or
household objects.

Dogs with separation anxiety often exhibit more than one of the above destructive behaviors.

In severe cases...

- Dogs have been known to break their teeth.
- They may even develop eating disorders and lethargic behavior.
- They tear their nails and skin trying to get out of crates.
- They destroy doors, and break through windows to escape as their anxiety increases.

Dogs with separation anxiety also often have an overly excited response when their owner returns home.

- They may whine, jump, or run in circles.
- This behavior may go on for an abnormal length of time after the owner gets home, and some dogs will have the same extreme response even if the owner has only been gone for a few minutes.

One important indication that separation anxiety disorder is the culprit is the timing of the inappropriate behavior. Your dog may be on its best behavior except during those occasions when you leave the dog alone for a period of time.

Risk Factors Associated With Separation Anxiety

- Punishment based: Disciplined dominance type training increases behavior problems (anxieties etc.) and lowers scores in obedience.
- Source of pet: Most shelter dogs have a higher amount of separation anxiety because they experienced it when they were relinquished.
- When a dog loses its attachment figure it will start to become insecure.

- Previously abandoned puppies are more anxious and less secure than puppies who have been with owner from puppy-hood.
- Anxious dog mothers increase the risk of separation anxiety in their pups.
- Symptoms may worsen if another dog in the home passes away or is rehomed. A new dog will not help.
- Excessive social interaction post adoption at 3 months of age.

Lowering The Risk Factors Of Separation Anxiety

- Studies show that vaccinating your dog before 8-9 weeks of age seems to lower the risk.
- Pheromones used for 4-7 days when the puppy comes into a new home.
- Number one protective factor is to have another dog at home when you adopt a puppy.
- Positive reinforcement, consistency, obedience training, and agility are correlated with fewer behavior problems, lower stress & anxiety and higher obedience scores.
- Predictability in daily routine
- There is no breed or sex correlation for separation anxiety.

Clinical Signs Of Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety like symptoms may be present for other behavioral causes. If these symptoms present themselves regardless of who the dog has bonded with is present or

not, it is likely not a separation anxiety issue and you should consult your veterinarian for further advice.

Other possibilities for these symptoms

- Difficulty in holding feces and urine: A gastrointestinal medical problem.
- Destruction: Not enough exercise, young dogs, or outside stimulation (sees something outside that gets them excited).
- Barrier frustration: Cannot handle being crated or gated. When you remove the crate or gate the dog behaves normally. This means the dog is bored (not enough to do).
- Vocalization – Territorial barker may be barking at things outside. A stress bark sounds very different than other forms of barking.

Physical symptoms

If your dog has the acute onset of separation anxiety or general anxiety there could be a medical component such as pain, or a dental problem. Below are the top clinical presentations of separation anxiety. There may be other symptoms present:

- Follows the owners around.
- Vocalization: howling, whining, may knock things down and may be distracted for a minute but will go right back to howling.
- Destruction: Doors, windows and owners possessions or items strong with the owners scent.

- Elimination: rarely or never spending time in an outdoor environment. Dogs who do not mind being outside probably do not have separation anxiety. When the owner is gone the dog may eliminate near doors, windows or anywhere else.
- Departure cue anxiety: Distress and autonomic signs such as depression, anorexia during departure, pacing, or whining.
- Gastrointestinal signs: Vomiting or diarrhea.
- Hyper salivation – a lot of drool on the floor or in the kennel.
- Increased motor activity – pacing, lying down and getting up repeatedly.
- Excessive grooming.
- Restlessness, shaking and shivering of the body.
- Aggression: Occasionally dogs are aggressive at the owner's departure. These dogs have issues that need to be addressed behaviorally.
- Noise phobias and storm phobias.

One will see these signs when the attachment figure is leaving, or right after they leave.

These symptoms may be cyclical every 25 to 45 minutes. As soon as the dog settles down, the symptoms will start again.

However, it is important to note that signs and symptoms need to be formally assessed by a qualified professional. This brings us to techniques for diagnosing separation anxiety.

What Should I Do If I Suspect My Dog Has Separation Anxiety?

If you feel your dog has separation anxiety, the first step is to diagnose the situation with the basic checking of symptoms and if the dog is having some serious physical discomfort, then have the pet undergo a complete physical examination. It is important to make sure that your dog's behavior is truly due to separation anxiety and not to something else. For instance, inappropriate urination may occur if your dog was never actually fully house trained, or if it has a urinary tract infection. A dog may bark when alone because it feels it is protecting its territory, or because it can hear another dog.

I recommend testing to make sure your dog does not have any underlying medical problems, which could contribute to behavior problems or make them worse. Tests may include a complete blood count, a chemistry profile, urinalysis, thyroid testing, a blood pressure check, and an ECG. These tests will also be important to verify the health status of your dog prior to being placed on any medication. Be sure that you have noted information of any other medication your dog is already taking, and any previous health problems.

What Will An Assessment Of Canine Separation Anxiety Reveal?

Separation anxiety being considered as a syndrome of pathological attachment of a dog to its caregivers usually presents as a constellation of behaviors represented as a syndrome, not just as one or two isolated behaviors. Correctly diagnosing separation anxiety requires veterinarians to consider the various behaviors expressed and to determine whether they fit a pattern. A number of other conditions that may be confused with separation anxiety must be ruled out before a diagnosis of separation anxiety can be confirmed.

How Is An Assessment Of Separation Anxiety Performed?

Owners fill out a questionnaire that encompasses factors such as the dog's background (known to influence the development of separation anxiety), attachment level towards owners, pre-departure and post-departure behaviors, and greeting behavior. The questionnaire should be filled out at the time of a dog's first veterinary visit for early detection of the syndrome. That way, corrective measures can be taken before the condition exacerbates.

In addition, all owners of newly acquired dogs should be asked to complete the questionnaire to detect separation anxiety so that, if necessary, they can be advised about "independence training." Owners of any dogs exhibiting behavior problems when their owner is away from home should be asked to complete the questionnaire so that a definitive diagnosis can be made.

Owners may be asked to complete a questionnaire similar to the one below, checking yes, no, or don't know to the questions relating to the dog's history. While not all dogs with separation anxiety have had a disturbed background, many have, so positive answers in this section provide an element of suspicion that separation anxiety is involved. Questions under the heading "Behavior" relate to the dog's attachment level, pre- and post-departure cues, behavior in the owner's absence, and greeting behavior. Here, affirmative responses may be qualified as mild, moderate or severe. Scoring the behaviors (see below) gives an indication of the severity of the condition.

Note: The following sample of questions and interpretation sections are meant for information only. Use this as a step-by-step guide to help diagnose your pet. In case of serious discomfort to your dog, it is advisable to visit a veterinarian to avoid serious mishaps.

History

- Did you acquire your dog after 3 months of age?
- Did you acquire your dog at 5 weeks of age or less?
- Was your puppy an orphan or hand raised?
- Was your dog acquired from a shelter, pound, or pet shop?
- Has your dog had multiple owners during their life?

Behavior

- Does your dog follow you around the house?
- Does your dog become anxious at the sound of car keys or when you put on your coat or shoes to go out?
- Does your dog exhibit other problem behaviors as you prepare to leave?
- Does your dog bark or whine excessively within 30 minutes of your departure?
- After you leave, does your dog act depressed?
- After you leave, does your dog have a loss of appetite?
- Does your dog destroy property only when you are away?
- Does your dog urinate or defecate in your home only when you are away?

- Does your dog regularly have diarrhea, vomit, or lick excessively in your absence?
- Does your dog exhibit an excessive greeting on your return (jumping, hyperactivity, barking - more than 2 to 3 minutes)?

Interpretation

- An affirmative answer to 5 out of 10 questions in the behavioral section indicates separation anxiety.
- Affirmative answers to any of the historical questions plus 4 out of 10 affirmative answers in the behavioral section of the questionnaire are grounds for a diagnosis of separation anxiety.
- Affirmative responses to 3 out of 10 behavioral questions, as long as these include hyper-attachment, destructive behavior, vocalization, or inappropriate urination or defecation.
- An affirmative answer to any 3 questions, including one indicating a dysfunctional background, indicates a sub-threshold level of affliction, i.e. the disorder is present to an extent but is not definitively diagnosable.
- Affirmative answers to less than 3 questions usually rules out separation anxiety.

For scoring, affirmative answers in any area of the history section scores 1 point (maximum score in this category). Responses to the behavioral questions are scored: Does not occur = 0, mild = 1, moderate = 2, severe = 3. A dog diagnosed with separation anxiety will thus have a minimum score of 5 points (5 mild expressions of behavioral anomaly in the behavioral section, or a dysfunctional history plus 4 affirmative answers in the behavioral section). Alternatively, a score of 4 points total,

comprising the specific behaviors indicted above could be considered diagnostic. At the other end of the scale, the most severe cases of separation anxiety possible would have a score of 30 on the behavioral questions (plus an additional 1 point if the dog had a dysfunctional history, as well).

The good thing is that this condition can be treated through behavioral modification techniques and medication. However, the pet owner will want to make sure the animal suffers from separation anxiety, not simply from boredom, before recommending a specific course of therapy, particularly if the treatment includes drugs.

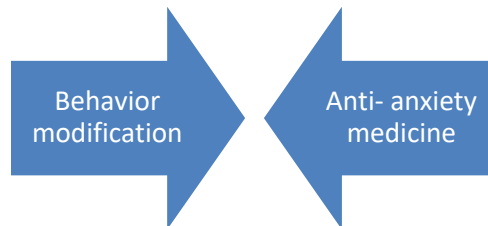
In cases that involve the use of medication, it is advisable to take your pet to the veterinarian rather than looking for amateur medication alternatives.

Chapter 4

Separation Anxiety - Prevention & Treatment

How Is Separation Anxiety Professionally Treated?

For dogs with separation anxiety, the most effective approach is usually a combination of behavior modification exercises and anti-anxiety medication.



It is essential to realize that both medication and behavior modification exercises are important parts of therapy for dogs with separation anxiety. In most cases, using one component alone will not be sufficient to achieve success. The medication is used to help your dog relax so that it can concentrate on performing the behavior modification exercises; the exercises are what actually change the dog's response to a stressful situation, over time

Medications

Commonly used medications include the following:

Clomipramine and fluoxetine: These are approved medications for the treatment of separation anxiety that can be prescribed by your veterinarian. Since these medications may take several weeks to achieve effective levels, short-acting drugs such as **alprazolam** may be prescribed at first. Any anti-anxiety drug prescribed by your veterinarian needs to be given exactly as directed.

- Dogs with separation anxiety have a higher overall anxiety level, and drugs used as part of a treatment plan for separation anxiety need to be given regularly, not just when the dog seems anxious.
- Patience is important; it can take weeks to months for certain drugs to become effective. It is often necessary to try several drugs or combinations of drugs, to determine what will work best for an individual dog.

Anxiety Wraps - A Useful Tool!

A pet anxiety wrap is a recent invention that attempts to help in many ways with regards to not just separation anxiety but other behavior conditions and phobias faced by pets.

The theory behind pet anxiety wraps is that dogs require different ways to learn from past experiences. Apart from the normal method of training pets, which is reward and punishment, there are exceptions faced by dogs whose past experience has been very harrowing and present fears are so overwhelming that they are unable to focus to get trained to avoid separation anxiety. This is for especially the young ones who have had previous pet owners who have not been caring enough or have had terrible experiences while separation from biological mother at the time of birth or similar other experiences that could have led to phobias or separation anxiety and other such anxieties.

A pet anxiety wrap is a fabric tool that increases the positive effects of sensations that are sent by the brain's receptors. A certain level of "maintained pressure" is applied continuously to calm frustrated nerves. The effect is similar to that of stroking and

patting down a dog.

No matter the authenticity of the manufacturers' claims, anxiety wraps are marketed with a note that they are a tool to be used in conjunction with other training techniques and not as a standalone remedy for all anxiety-related undesirable behaviors.

Anxiety wraps handle major triggers of anxiety in dogs such as separation, thunderstorms, fireworks, car rides, strangers, unexpected loud noises, injury or other disruptions to a dog's life. Wrapping is similar to swaddling an infant and uses a technique called "maintained pressure," first developed by Dr. Temple Grandin. Temple Grandin's "hug machine" was developed after seeing how cattle would calm down while being put into a squeeze chute to receive their shots. The hug machine was based on the same principle to treat the anxiety resulting from her own autism. Her "hug machine" functions by maintaining a constant pressure on the body, leading to a reduction in anxiety. Similar pressure helps the dog become calm when fearful, anxious or hyperactive.

Linda Tellington-Jones' "TTouch" technique, designed as a way of relaxing and training horses and eventually adapted to dogs as well, sometimes utilizes an ace bandage wrapped around the animal. Body wraps are also used to extend the benefits of the other aspects of the treatment.

Things one will need:

- "Ace" or elastic bandages; or
- Strips of cloth; or
- Snug t-shirt; or
- Spandex tank top

For best results, I recommend the purchase of a professional dog anxiety wrap product.

My top picks are:

1. An Anxiety Wrap made by the company Animals Plus. These are high quality wraps that come in a range of different sizes so you can find one that fits your dog perfectly. You can click on the following links to shop for a [Toy-Plus](#), [Mini-Plus](#), [X-Small](#), [Small](#), [Medium](#), [Large](#), [X-Large](#) or [XX-Large](#) version. These wraps are great value and may just do the trick for your dog.
2. The ThunderShirt™. This is an excellent product for anxious dogs, especially for curing symptoms arising from loud noises such as thunder or fireworks, or for those dogs that get anxious when travelling. It has received critical acclaim and has been successful in curing separation anxiety in many dogs of all breeds and upbringings when used as part of a holistic treatment program. As with the Anxiety Wrap, the Thundershirt™ comes in a range of sizes. Click on the following links to shop for an [X-Small](#), [Small](#), [Medium](#), [Large](#) or [Extra Large](#) Thundershirt™ depending on the size of your dog."Storm Defender Cape"
3. The Storm Defender™ cape. This is a super-man style red cape that your dog wears. It looks really cool, and has been reported to have lessened the severity of dog separation anxiety in 95% of cases. You can even get your dogs name monogrammed on the cape! Check out <http://www.stormdefender.com/> for more

details and to purchase.

Using An Ace Bandage To Create An Anxiety Wrap

Step 1

Start by putting the wrap on your dog when it is in a relaxed state, either from a massage or after a meal, so your dog begins to associate the wrap with relaxation.

Place the middle of an elastic or "Ace" bandage across the dog's chest. Bring both ends up and cross them over the shoulders, like wrapping arms around someone in a hug. The wrap will “connect” all parts of the body: front, back, right, left, top, and bottom. The wrap needs to be snug, but check it periodically to be sure it doesn't interfere with movement or circulation. The illustrations here are for a Half-wrap, but some practitioners might also use a Cross-wrap.

Step 2

Cross the bandage over the top of the shoulder blades; this is a point of balance in 4-legged animals.

Step 3

Next, cross the loose ends of the bandage under the belly.

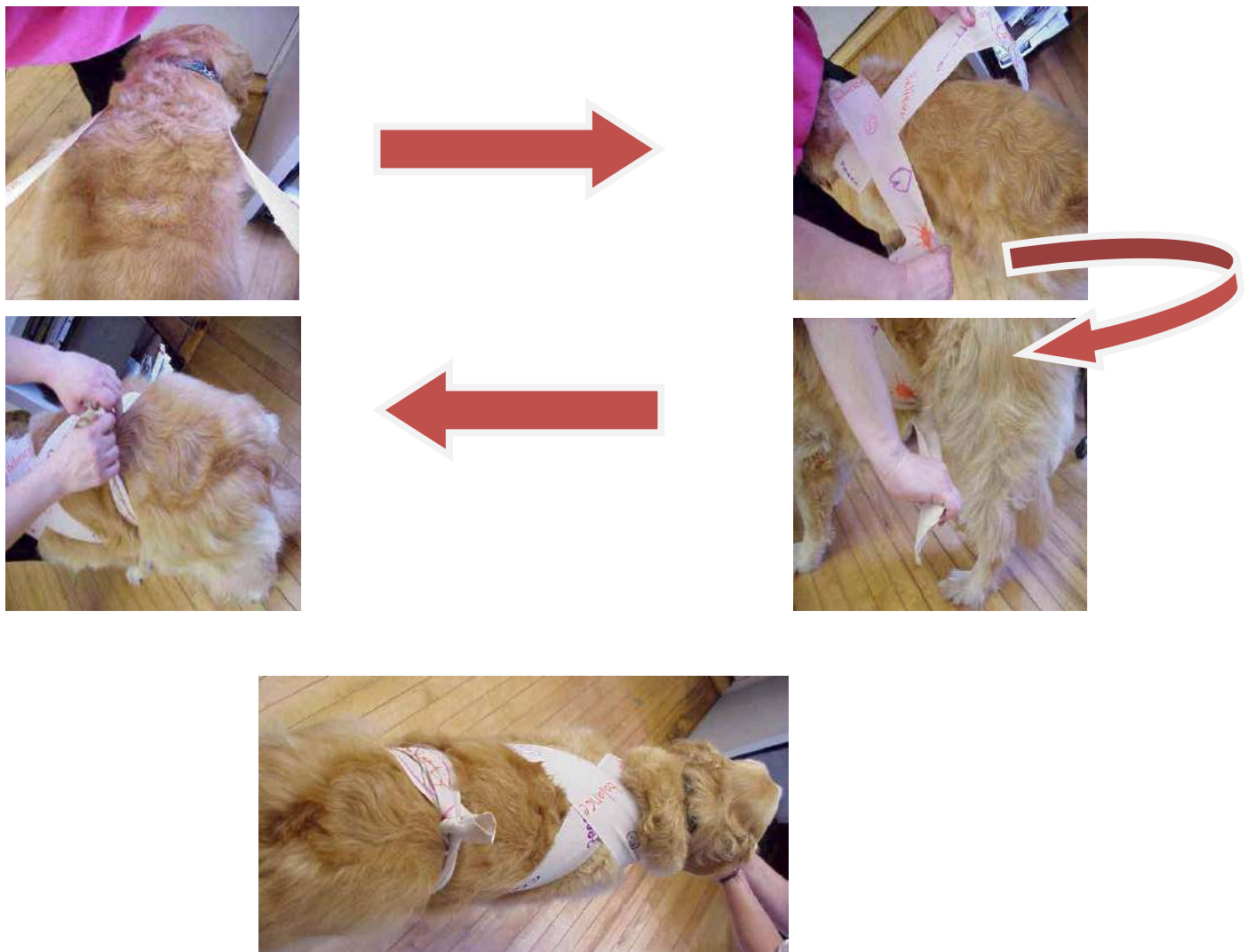
Step 4

Tie the loose ends over the top of the lower back. There should be a uniform pressure around the entire bandage. As the hair compresses you may need to re-tie the wrap to have a good fit. The wrap can also be hand-decorated as per the owners' needs!!

When finished, the figure-8 wrap surrounds the dog with comforting pressure. The wrap

may only be needed for a few minutes or it can be left on as long as necessary to relieve fear, tension, or anxiety. Dogs with thunderstorm phobia may have a new confidence once the wrap is applied. Try it on more than one occasion if you are not satisfied at first. You may also treat with a Bach Flower Remedy for emotionally challenging situations. There are Flower Remedies for other symptoms like fear, shyness, grief and many other destabilizing emotions or behaviors.

A visual representation of this process is provided on the next page:



An anxiety wrap is one part of a holistic approach to mind-body wellness. Special cases will need more input from a professional practitioner, behaviorist, trainer, veterinarian and others to find the underlying problem and develop a long term plan for rehabilitation

Using A Shirt As An Anxiety Wrap

Step 1

Alternatively, a very snug shirt or a spandex tank top will work well as a pressure wrap.

Step 2

Put the t-shirt or tank top backwards on the dog, with the tail poking through the neck opening.

Step 3

Snugly tie the 'shirt tails' across the dog's chest.

Step 4

Some people sew parts of ace bandages onto the shirt so that the bandages can be wrapped around appropriate parts of the dog. This will allow you to focus pressure at points that seem most soothing for a particular dog.

Buying & Using Pressure Wraps

Step 1

You can purchase a pre-made pressure wrap, such as the Anxiety Wrap, a lightweight calming body wrap, which was created by Susan Sharpe, a certified TTouch practitioner (www.anxietywrap.com); the Thundershirt which applies a gentle, constant pressure to a dog's torso (www.thundershirt.com/); and the Storm Defender, "a cape created to give relief to dogs who are excessively afraid of thunderstorms" (www.stormdefender.com/).

Step 2

The pressure wrap provides constant, gentle pressure to a dog's torso and chest. It is a non-drug approach used to modify the behavior of dogs that suffer from anxiety.

Step 3

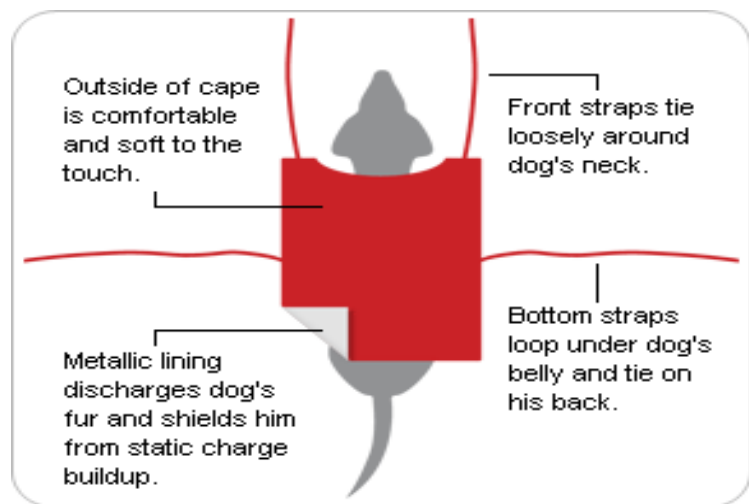
According to A Study on Pressure Wraps for Combating Dog Anxiety from advanced Semiotics in Research, Health & Medicine, "The wrap applies to have maintained pressure across a wide area of the body, stimulating the body's receptors to help in transmitting different sensations to different parts of the brain. When the animal receives this new information, its awareness & focus can change, resulting in the animal "letting go" of the old sensation and modifying its behavior."

Then there is the Storm Defender™ cape that provides relief to dogs that are excessively anxious.

Some learning is involved. The maximum efficiency is reached after the dog has experienced two or three anxious situations with the cape on. Timing is crucial! The cape must be put on before the dog has reached the point of high agitation.

Complete instructions are included with the cape, however you can follow these simple guidelines:

1. Put the cape on when the dog first notices something.
2. Learning is involved. If you usually give your dog drugs during anxious behavior, consult your vet. Certain drugs may make the learning process more difficult.



3. Especially with separation anxiety, do not put the cape on and leave the dog alone as it will constantly need your support in such situations.

Tips & Warnings

- ✓ Start by putting the wrap on your dog when it is in a relaxed state, so your dog associates the wrap with relaxation. Eventually, or in some cases immediately, the physical sensation of wearing the wrap will provide the dog with a feeling of safety and comfort and will distract the dog from focusing on her fears.
- ✓ A pressure wrap often successfully calms a dog the first time you use it, however some animals require more experiences wearing the wrap before symptoms are reduced or eliminated.
- ✓ Never leave a dog unsupervised while it is wearing clothing in which it may become entangled.

Behavior Modification Techniques To Cure Separation Anxiety

If your dog is suffering from separation anxiety and you have all but given up hope, don't despair! Below you will find a host of techniques you can employ to cure your dog once and for all. All of these techniques come under the category of behavior modification as they work on teaching your dog to alter its behavior from a stress state to a normal dog attitude.

Your veterinarian may be able to give you help with these behavior modification exercises, or refer you to an experienced animal behaviorist or trainer in your area. If you do decide to enlist the help of a professional, it is important that the person you work with has had experience working with dogs with separation anxiety.

Behavior modification exercises must be done consistently (for weeks to months) to see results and the exercises may need to be continued for life. Persevere with the

techniques here and never give up - if you love your dog it will be well worth the effort!

Seek professional assistance

Consult a canine behaviorist, who can develop and teach you how to apply an effective behavior modification program for your individual dog. Separation anxiety treatment typically requires desensitization and counter-conditioning programs. Some are explained well in books, but are best guided by a trainer. It often takes 10 or more weeks of consistent practice of a behavior modification program to see results.

Desensitization program for separation anxiety

Follow the "Make Your Dog Work for a Living" or "No Free Lunch" programs described in books and on the internet. Have a search around for more information on these ideas.

A reverse-psychology technique

This "umbilical cord" tactic helps with dogs of some breeds and temperaments who tend to desire a little space of their own. Put the dog on a 4 to 6-foot leash, and then attach the leash to yourself. Keep the dog tethered to you for lengthy periods as you go about the house doing your chores, reading, etc. Usually the dog will like being so close to its owner and will relax. But over time, the novelty will wear off and the dog will likely want some more space. Don't un-tether your dog until it seems good and bored with the umbilical arrangement. Practice this for a week or so, and most likely, the dog will be very glad to be given its own space and have some time apart from its owner.

Teach independence

Avoid rewarding attention-seeking behavior. Reward the dog with petting, treats, or other attention only when it is calm and quiet.

Reward relaxation

With your dog in a "sit" or "down" position in a quiet resting area in the home, reward your dog when it is calm. A calm dog will not be panting, wagging its tail vigorously, or otherwise moving in an erratic manner. Use a word like "easy" or "steady" to serve as a cue for the relaxed behavior. When your dog learns to be relaxed with you close by (this may take days to weeks), slowly increase the distance between you and your dog. Provide a treat when the dog is calm. If your dog shows evident signs of being relaxed (puts its head down or sighs), provide an extra special reward.

Desensitize to departure cues

Almost everyone has a set routine when they leave the house - shaving or putting on makeup, putting on shoes, picking up the keys, putting on a coat, etc. These activities inadvertently signal to your dog that you are going to leave, and many dogs start to get anxious as soon as they see these departure cues. To desensitize your dog to these cues, do them several times during the day but don't leave. Ignore any anxiety your dog may show.

Downplay departures

It is best to ignore your dog for 15-30 minutes before you depart and as you depart.

Provide safety

Unless confinement increases anxiety, house your dog in a comfortable, safe, room or spacious crate. If your dog cannot be left safely alone, consider dog day care. If your dog can be left for short intervals, consider having a dog walker one or more times a day.

Enrich the surroundings

Turn on the radio and lights 30 minutes before you leave. There are other tips provided in detail in the forthcoming topics

Provide treat-filled toys or safe chew toys as you leave

Regularly change the type of toy to provide variety. Also provide the toy at times when your dog is calm and you are not leaving, so the toy itself does not become a departure cue.

Provide a comfortable bed

This can sometimes be overlooked by some owners. It is important that your dog has somewhere to rest that is safe and comfortable. It should be shielded from the wind and the rain and be situated in an area that provides a comfortable temperature.

Tone down the return

Be low key when you return. Refrain from greeting your dog until it has calmed down.

Do not punish or scold your dog for displaying separation anxiety

I know I have been saying this over and over (and mention it a few more times throughout this book) but it is just such an important point. Separation anxiety in dogs is not unlike anxiety in humans. If you have ever experienced, or have witnessed someone having a panic attack you will know that this is a frightening experience. One of the key

Pheromones

Pheromones are chemicals produced by the body that, when smelled, can effect

behavior. Pheromone products, such as Comfort Zone® with Dog Appeasing Hormone (DAP) may help some dogs with separation anxiety.

Exercise and play routine

Another component of behavior modification that may help your dog to be less anxious is increased exercise. Exercise has mental as well as physical benefits for dogs.

Veterinary behaviorists often recommend 45-60 minutes of intense activity twice a day.

If your dog is a 'couch potato,' start out slow and build up the intensity and length of time over several weeks. If your dog has any health problems, check with your veterinarian before starting the exercise program.

In addition to exercise, mental stimulation (playing fetch, working on commands, practicing agility exercises at home or in a class) is also important. Many types of dogs were originally bred to do a job, and they can become stressed without the mental activity they would normally use if they were "working."

Please bear in mind repeatedly that the dog does not have this problem behavior because it is mad at you or trying to 'get back' at you. Punishment, especially after the fact, will only be confusing and cause more anxiety. Always start with a visit to your veterinarian to rule out health problems. Separation anxiety can be a very frustrating and traumatic situation for both you and your dog, but with patience and proper treatment it can usually be dramatically improved.

Supportive Actions For Dealing With Dog Separation Anxiety

Leave home quietly and come home quietly

As often as you can, step out of the front door while your dog is watching as well as when your dog is not watching. At first, step outside for a few seconds and then come right back in before your dog has a chance to get upset. Do this several times a day varying the amount of time you are outside. Vary what you do as well. Take your coat, keys and briefcase sometimes. At other times just take a walk around the block.

If you normally leave through the garage door, substitute that for the front door. The idea is to remove the association between a specific door and your dog being left alone for a long time. If you have a specific routine before you leave for the day, try varying the routine. You can also go into a room, close the door behind you leaving your dog outside (or vice versa). This accomplishes the same purpose as actually leaving the house if your dog normally gets upset when you put a door between you.

Your dog can become a prisoner of habit. If your dog is used to feeling stressed and anxious whenever it sees you go to the hall closet and take out your coat, force of habit can make your dog continue to do so. Mix up the routine, leave your coat and briefcase and keys in the car in the garage and slip out quietly. Soon your dog will not be able to tell whether you are leaving for 10 seconds or 3 hours.

Try not to make a big show of leaving or coming home. A dog with separation anxiety finds the experience of you leaving very stressful so make sure you are the calm one! When you return, greet your dog calmly and ignore its crazy antics. Just come and go without any fanfare. For some dogs, completely ignoring them for 15 minutes before leaving and after coming home works very well.

Give your dog plenty of exercise, socialization and fun

A dog that is tired and happy is more likely to sleep and not get into trouble. If you can arrange it, take your dog on a long walk right before you leave.

A long walk or jog consists of 1-2 hours (or more if you can manage it) of active walking, jogging, or running with your dog, not a leisurely 20 minute stroll down the street. If your dog is particularly active and you are not, you may have to consider biking, skating or scooter driving with your dog. As a last resort, you may want to consider a treadmill.

Although a romp at the dog park is an option, many dogs do not get much exercise at parks and a dog with separation anxiety needs to move at a constant, fast pace over a long period of time to ease that anxiety and become tired and satisfied. If you have a retriever, an hour or so of continuous running and retrieving may do the trick.

If you plan on exercising with your dog before you head off to work in the morning, you may need to wake up several hours ahead of your normal schedule. With a large, young dog you will need to add 1-2 hours of walking or 1 hour of cycling, roller-blading or active retrieving. You will then want a cool down period before feeding and leaving your dog for the day.

If you find that a significant increase in exercise decreases the separation anxiety, you can then see if exercise at more convenient times works as well.

Feed your dog before you leave

Some dogs become tenser if they are hungry. A stomach-filling meal with complex carbohydrates like oatmeal can make your dog sleepy and relaxed. The goal is to have a well-exercised, well-fed dog happily engaged in snoozing before you leave.

Leave the radio on

An empty house can be unnerving to some dogs. They can hear every car, pedestrian, delivery person and squirrel that is outside the door. A strange sound can set off whining and barking. A radio can add some white noise to the environment and dampen your dog's reaction to what is going on outside. You can try a classical music station or some mild talk radio. Controversial talk radio, with lots of people arguing and loud commercials can make the situation worse. Try National Public Radio (no commercials, lots of serious chat) which is usually available on a local FM station in your area.

Give your dog something to do

A second pet could be the answer. With a second pet in the house, your dog won't feel as abandoned. If this is not possible, try some engaging activities:

- Try giving your dog a cardboard box to shred (just make sure your dog is not the type to eat the box!).
- Give your dog a treat-filled dog toy such as a puzzle box or rubber chew made just for dogs. Some people use hollow rubber chew toys stuffed with their dog's daily meal, plugged with cream cheese and then frozen solid. This can provide a extended distraction for your dog as it works for its meal!
- You will have to try out a few concoctions and toys to see what works. You will want to have one that will occupy your dog for an hour or so or at least long enough for it to forget that you have left them alone.
- Give your dog several chew toys that you rotate every few days. These could include rope toys, nylon bones and other safe toys.

Dogs are intelligent creatures and sometimes they get into trouble out of boredom and

frustration. Try teaching your dog basic obedience (sit, heel, stay, etc.) and some party tricks (play dead, fetch slippers, etc.) It will give your dog something to think about while you are away.

Try an anti-bark citronella collar

Some dogs bark incessantly when their anxiety levels are high. If this is an issue, try a citronella collar that spurts a cloud of citronella into your dog's face when they bark. The collar consists of a battery-operated box that is loaded with citronella. The box is attached to a webbing collar that goes around your dog's neck. The vibrations from your dog's bark will set the collar off. The collar sends a spurt of citronella which surprises your dog into silence. Dogs quickly learn the routine.

This is a fairly expensive product but it can provide immediate relief for some dogs. The box may be too large and heavy for very small dogs and it may not work at all for very stubborn or overly sensitive dogs. The collar may increase the anxiety of some dogs. You may have to thin or trim the neck hair of long-haired dogs or the vibrations from barking may not register with the box. In addition, with double coated dogs, the citronella may simply go into your dog's coat. It is both the spicy scent and the surprising spurt of air that gets your dog's attention. For some dogs, using the collar without the spray is sufficient.

You may not have to use the collar for an extended period of time. It should be used in conjunction with behavior modification, increased socialization, increased exercise and possible medication. There are also similar collars that provide electric shocks instead of the spurt of air with citronella. If you are desperate to stop incessant barking and you have a highly insensitive dog this may be a last resort.

As with all such tools, these collars are effective when they are on and in working order. They do not train your dog but are a temporary measure only.

Aromatherapy and Dog Appeasement Pheromones (DAP)

Dogs have such highly developed senses of smell that aromatherapy may work better for them than it does for humans. Consider adding some calming scents, such as lavender, to their environment. A plug-in air freshener or a stick scent-diffuser are safe ways to provide long-lasting and continuous scent.

Associate the scent with pleasant experiences such as receiving favorite treats or having a soothing massage. This may or may not work but at least your house will be nicely scented.

A more targeted approach is products that mimic the scent of a nursing mother. Since dogs associate nursing with feeling calm and secure, this product hopes to recreate that feeling. The Dog Appeasement Pheromone or DAP comes in a variety of forms including a collar, a plug-in diffuser and a spray. It may take some time but it is said to work very well with some dogs and not at all with other dogs.

Foster self-assurance and a degree of independence

Instill confidence and independence. Dogs need to find a balance between respecting their pack leader, enjoying companionship and handling solitude. "Don't let the dog follow you around the house," advises Los Angeles trainer Cinimon Clark. "He needs to learn to survive by himself." Teach and then frequently use the Down-Stay command. For instance, when you're washing dishes and the dog hovers next to you, instruct your dog to "down" on his blanket and "stay" there the entire time. Then release your dog and have some play time together.

Insecure dogs tend to follow their people around the house, look anxious as the people prepare to leave, and become distraught when they are alone. They bark after their people leave, sometimes destroy things, and may even urinate or defecate out of anxiety.

Often, it's tempting to give an anxious, insecure dog too much attention, but over-empathizing usually aggravates behavior problems. Insecure dogs need to be retrained to be independent, writes Dr. Nicholas Dodman in "The Dog Who Loved Too Much." It takes firm yet supportive leadership and clear direction to help your dog overcome this behavioral problem.

Build tolerance to staying alone

- Retrain your dog to accept absences as an ordinary event, using the acclimation exercises in the "Preventing Separation Anxiety" section. For a dog who already displays separation anxiety, be prepared for using absences of shorter duration and working up to longer periods more slowly. Progressing too fast will lead to setbacks. The idea is to advance slowly enough to avoid the dog lapsing into anxious freak-outs.
- After a few days of the leaving/return practice sessions, increase the duration of absences randomly so the dog can't guess when you will return.
- Practice "fire drills": go out, return, sit, play a game, go out. Vary the time you are gone.
- Reduce the contrast technique: canine behaviorist/author Larry Lachman explains that most separation-anxious dogs cannot tolerate the either-or conditions of attention when the owner is home vs. no attention when the owner leaves. So reduce the contrast: pick two days out of week when you are home. Ignore the dog for 6 to 8 hours on those days, to match the time you are away at work. Limit attention to only feeding or letting the dog out to potty during these sessions. Your dog will learn: "it's no big deal when my owner is gone; even when they're home, they still sometimes ignore me."

Desensitize your dog to departures

You can desensitize your dog to your departures with this following exercise. *Note: this differs somewhat from the acclimation process described above, and can be used in conjunction with that more elaborate routine.*

- Get ready to leave.
- Go to the door, but don't exit.
- Quietly move about, go back to the door, leave.
- Come back in.
- Ignore the dog during this exercise.
- Exit and enter several times, increasing the length of your absences from one minute to one hour.

Take all excitement, fuss and drama out of departures and returns

Keep arrivals and departures low-key. Do not use too much of emotion when saying goodbye or after returning home. In fact, it can be best to say nothing and avoid eye contact, totally ignoring your dog for 15 or 20 minutes before you leave the house and after you arrive home. After that, provided the dog is reasonably calm, you can let them out of the safety room and calmly, quietly pet and praise them. For a dog who still displays significant anxiety, it's usually recommended to continue ignoring them until they completely settle down and begin to relax.

Uncoupling cues - easy technique to desensitize departures

Dogs are extremely adept at reading body language. So chances are, your dog can easily tell the difference between your going outside to bring in the mail and your departure for work. Your dog will notice cues such as your pre-departure preparations -- getting your coat and bag, taking out keys, turning off lights. Separation-anxious dogs will respond by exhibiting anxiety signals such as whining, pacing, drooling, yelping and/or yipping.

One way to reduce your dog's anxiety about being separated from you is to "uncouple the cues" -- engage in your pre-departure routines without always leaving the house. Put on your coat and rattle your keys at times other than when you are actually going out. Keep grabbing your coat and keys and putting them back down again until your dog doesn't bother getting excited anymore. Now you can start rewarding the dog for NOT responding to the stimulus; this is a form of shaping behavior.

If there is something else that triggers your dog's anxiety over your leaving, such as putting on shoes by a door or switching lights on or off, throw these into the mix as well. This exercise will help desensitize your dog to the anxiety-starters that signal your imminent departure.

Establish a "safety cue"

A safety cue is a word, gesture, action or even a special toy that you teach the dog to associate with the idea that when you leave, you will always come back. Use the safety cue each time you leave the house, starting by cueing it to brief absences (such as taking out the trash or checking the mail box). Your safety cue might be gently saying "Take care of the house" ... a playing radio or tape ... or a distinctive chew toy.

Start out using the safety cue during practice sessions. However, to establish the cue as an effective tool, do not use it when you're leaving for longer durations than your dog

has learned to tolerate.

Timing of attention

As previously mentioned some of our own behaviors as dog guardians can contribute to a dog's intolerance of being alone or ignored - such as constantly petting or fussing over the dog when we are home. If this sounds like your situation, try changing your behavior: always let your dog sit before giving attention and then only give 10 seconds of petting at a time. If your dog wants more, wait until they are not actively seeking it, have your dog sit again, and then give them another 10 seconds of petting.

Use training to build the dog's self-confidence

- Teach Sit, Down and Stay. This can aid the effort to teach your dog how to relax in one spot when you leave. Reward your dog with positive reinforcement - praise, or praise plus treats - for staying calmly in a position for increasingly longer periods of time. Don't punish your dog for "not obeying." Just ignore incorrect responses, regain the dog's attention and continue.
- Gradually increase the distance you move away from your dog so that you can eventually move briefly out of your dog's sight while they remain in the "stay" position. The idea is to teach your dog that they can remain calm, and in a non-anxious state, in one place while you go to another. Take easy opportunities to practice. For instance, when you're watching TV with your dog nearby and you get up for a snack, tell your dog "stay." When you return, give your dog a tidbit and very gently praise them for obeying.
- When practicing these leaving/returning sessions, increase the duration of your absence randomly to prevent your dog from learning to guess when you will return.

- You are working to retrain your dog to listen to you and to be less clingy, aiding your effort to accustom your dog to being alone without getting frantic. Depending on your individual dog and the consistency of your training efforts, you should be able to move briefly out of your dog's sight after a few days.
- This exercise is an example of counter-conditioning - teaching a new behavior (such as Sit) that is counter to the previously ingrained behavior (such as trailing you). Then the new behavior substitutes for the old one when the dog is responding to a stimulus or event (such as your departure). As with most aspects of training dogs (or people), it is usually more effective to redirect the dog to a desirable/acceptable behavior than to get them to just "stop" engaging in an undesired behavior. By substituting something acceptable for something unwanted, you give your dog an outlet for their physical and mental energy.
- Obedience training, practiced daily, helps a dog develop confidence by giving them a sense of accomplishment. However, realize that obedience training alone will not lessen separation anxiety. It is part of an overall therapeutic program.
- Sign up for a positive reinforcement-oriented obedience class. An advantage of group classes is that you can sometimes have another handler work with your dog in the class, thus helping lessen the dog's distrust of other people and situations.

Create a safe haven

- For the dog's home-alone place, choose a safe, puppy-proofed room with plenty of light and family smells -- ideally, it should be a place in which the pack (your family) regularly convenes, such as a kitchen or family room. If there's no door, block the entrance with a sturdy baby-gate or other form of

fencing.

- Mistake proof the dog's room to avoid any kind of damage due to mischief. Latch cabinets, keep plants out of reach, close bathroom doors or at least keep toilet lids closed. Keep this den-like area safe. Make sure the windows are closed, too; anxious dogs have been known to push through partially closed windows and tear through screens.
- Prevent access to items that you don't want your dog to chew, since chewing is a natural impulse to dogs, and the nervous canine usually feels an increased need to chew. Remove shoes, collectibles, tablecloths, baskets and other items.
- Make off-limits objects undesirable if you can't move them. Hairspray is often an effective repellent. First, coat a cotton swab with the hairspray and let your dog approach it. The swab will taste bad when your dog licks it. Then, liberally apply the hairspray to couch cushions, wood molding and any places the dog chewed before. The spray's smell and taste will repel the dog.
- Muffle noises, such as neighboring barking dogs or passersby, as best as you can.

Provide physical and mental stimulation

- Give your dog a fun job to occupy your pet when you leave for work. Hiding small treats around the house to create a food scavenger hunt is a great idea. First, teach your dog a "find the treat" command. Once your dog learns the meaning of the command, hide treats in clear view for the first few sessions. Then place the treats in less visible places to challenge and occupy your dog. You can set up a scavenger hunt each morning before you leave for work to provide an engaging distraction for your dog - and help them learn

to accept (and even possibly ignore) your departures.

- Make sure your dog has safe, stimulating activities when they are left alone. These include access to safe chew toys, including hollow Kong-type toys that can be stuffed with food for long-lasting enjoyment. You can stuff Kongs with peanut butter, low-fat yogurt or cream cheese, pieces of rice cake, mashed potato or sweet potato, rice, steamed chopped veggies such as carrots, and of course, moist dog food, kibble or a combination thereof. You can even feed the dog's meal via the Kong or Buster Cube. In any case, this will keep the dog occupied for a long time.
- You can reserve such interactive toys for use only during your workday absences to help the dog make positive associations with departures. Another clever, long-lasting treat: "chicken-circles". Pour chicken broth into a plastic food container and freeze, and then put the frozen treat in the dog's den 15 minutes before you leave for work.

Enrich the dog's environment

- Interactive toys are great choices as mentioned earlier.
- Play music. A CD player gives you more control over what your dog hears than a radio. But you do want something that can play continuously. Choose classical music or easy listening, since the idea is to help calm your dog. News radio can sometimes work, but not if the station broadcasts talk shows with debates or loud, anxious, excited hosts and guests.
- Note: Playing music, radio or news broadcasts works only if your dog has learned to consistently associate these sounds with being alone in a non-anxious state. So practice playing these sounds when you are home.

- Tape-record normal household sounds and let the tape play for comfort. Put on a continuous-play tape recording of your voice calmly reading a magazine. Occasionally play the tape when you are home so your dog does not associate the tape only with your departure.
- These audio tools can also serve to buffer other sounds, which can be helpful for dogs living in apartments, condos and other attached housing.
- A playing TV can provide auditory and visual stimulation. Again, take care to choose a channel with content that will not rile or upset your dog.
- If your answering machine broadcasts incoming messages, phone home during the day and talk awhile to your dog. Note: while this works with some dogs, it can backfire with others.
- Leave a T-shirt you slept in or other soft clothing item that bears your smell. However, don't use old shoes, since you don't want to encourage dogs to chew other shoes that are often accessible.
- Some dogs respond well to pheromone-based products such as Comfort Zone DAP, a plug-in item which releases a nontoxic synthetic version of calming pheromones produced by lactating female dogs.

Keep to a routine

- Especially when training your dog and when trying to help reduce separation anxiety symptoms, stick to a routine. That way, your dog can eventually learn, and come to trust, that you will always come home ... and that they can count on you (or another trusted person) to feed, walk and play with them regularly so they don't have to worry about being starved of these necessities.

- Also, it is best to not leave a clinically separation-anxious dog for more than a couple of hours at a time until you start seeing results from a structured behavior modification program. Yes, this is not easy. But the idea is to try to reduce and eliminate freak out periods; that way, the deeply ingrained symptoms will start to fade sooner. Arrange to have trusted people around for the first two or three weeks of your dog's separation anxiety-reduction program, and practice gradually increasing the time the dog is left alone.
- Some folks use a timer connected with a light or radio as a signal that they are coming home soon. Set the timer to go off about 30 minutes before you get home.

Don't let your dog train you

Remember that dogs tend to do what works ... or what has seemed to work in their past. If your dog howls scratches and throws themselves at the door when you depart, and then you turn around, reenter your house and console the dog, you will have reinforced the idea to your dog that howling, scratching and throwing themselves against the door works. These anxious behaviors are already self-rewarding to your dog in that they provide an outlet (albeit a temporary and ineffective one) for the dog's intense anxiety. You don't want to add any more "reward" for these dysfunctional behaviors.

Keep these additional tips in mind

- Ignore attention-seeking behaviors. Do not respond when the dog demands attention. This helps teach your dog that they can't manipulate you to get attention.
- Yes, you can give your dog attention, but for the needy or separation-anxious

dog, it's best if you initiate the attention, and as much as possible, tie attention to desired behaviors.

- Instead of the dog initiating contact with you, strive daily to change the dynamic: you initiate the contact, be it playing, petting, deciding when to eat and take walks. The owner, as pack leader, should control the activities. If the owner controls activities in a manner that protects and meets the needs of the dog, the dog's trust their owner will increase and their insecurities will fade.
- If your dog comes up to you for a pet, ignore this for about 3 minutes or until they stop requesting attention. After this, ask your dog to come over and "sit". Now you can pet your dog. Use commands like 'enough' for stopping the petting. If your dog still tries to get your attention, walk away.
- Ration attention out in small bits to ease your dog's dependence on you and other family members. Limit attention to times when the dog is engaged in a desirable behavior, such as resting calmly their own spot (vs. draped over your lap), and when the dog responds to a verbal command or hand signal. Have your dog earn attention by telling them to "Sit" and "Down-Stay." When you give a separation-anxious dog attention, dole it out in very brief increments. One second can be enough.
- Avoid letting the separation-anxious dog sit in your lap, drape themselves over you, or rest in elevated, "human" places like the sofa. And don't let the dog sleep on the bed with you. They can be in the same room, just on their own bed. If your dog insists upon sneaking back into your bed, you can tie a long leash to a dresser. The idea is to foster some independence, so take these steps at least until your dog has overcome their separation anxiety problems.

Behaviour Modification Techniques - A Summary

- Give your dog adequate exercise and playtime every day. Dogs are social beings, so this activity is important not only to channel their physical energy, but also to engage their minds and meet their need for human companionship. Don't wait until your dog begs for attention. As leader, it is your job to initiate and lead the dog in play. As for walks, most dogs need two brisk leash-walks of at least 15 or 20 minutes each. Some dogs need more.
- Avoid lavishing too much attention on your dog. Same goes for the wrong type of attention, such as overindulging with constant touching, always having them in your lap, draped over you or leaning next to you, placing the dog in elevated positions where humans customarily are (in the front seat of the car, at the table, on the couch, in or on your bed) ,or coddling (and thus rewarding) when they display fearful or aggressive behavior. Other missteps to avoid:
 - ❖ Overly excited greetings when you arrive home from work;
 - ❖ Petting the dog every time they demand it, such as by rubbing up against you or pushing their head against your hand; or
 - ❖ Letting your dog initiate play instead of the other way around.
- By creating a demand-lavish attention dynamic, you would inadvertently teach your dog to be far too dependent on you; increasing the chances the dog will suffer overwhelming anxiety when you're gone. There is a difference between unhealthy overdependence and healthy trust. You want to be the leader, you want the dog to trust, respect and listen to you, but you don't want the dog to become an emotional slave who can't bear to be alone.
- Teach your dog to earn attention and praise by obliging your requests to sit, lie down or come when asked.

- Reward your dog for resting quietly in their own area. Reward calm behavior with quiet attention and treats. This will help your dog associate their area, den or bed with serenity and security. Attention is often a highly motivational reward for good behavior.
- Keep to a routine, at least until the dog fully adjusts to your home. Canines thrive on a routine, which also helps them learn that you come and go, you always return, and that they can count on getting attention, food and exercise each day -- avoiding and alleviating their anxiety.
- Keep departures and returns low-key. Don't make a big show of leaving. Gather your items quietly, efficiently and matter-of-factly and quietly leave. Be aware that dogs are very sensitive to their owners' actions and activities. This includes an owner's "leaving routine": most dogs quickly pick up that when their person gets their shoes, coat, briefcase and keys and begins fiddling with the lights, it means the person is departing for an extended period. Do not act anxious; your dog will pick up on this and it will become contagious.
- Remember, it's unfair and unreasonable to expect a dog to hold their urine for much longer than 6-8 hours. Young dogs might only be able to physically "hold it" for 2-4 hours. By being reasonable in your expectations, you will achieve results more quickly.

Separation Anxiety Action Plan - Steps To Take Before You Leave Your Dog Alone Each Day

A solid routine is very important when treating your dog for separation anxiety. Follow the routine below every time you leave your dog at home, and over time they will display less symptoms as they become more accustomed to your consistent departure cues.

1. Feed and then vigorously exercise your dog before leaving for work. A tired

dog is more likely to remain calm. Have the dog heel by your side and sit every minute or so; this helps channel pent-up tension.

2. Vary your dog-walking route to provide extra mental stimulation for the dog -- and you - at no cost to your schedule. Most dogs need two brisk walks of at least 15 or 20 minutes. Some dogs need more. Make sure you make time in your schedule EVERY day.
3. Fifteen minutes before you leave, confine your dog to their special home-alone place.
4. Just before leaving, give your dog a good, safe long-lasting and preferably interactive toy, such as a Kong filled with kibble and peanut butter, cottage cheese or yogurt. This will help counter-condition the dog to see departures as good. A food-stuffed or food-smeared toy can occupy your dog for a few hours, and even distract them enough that they won't notice you're leaving. Provide the dog with long-lasting treats such as sterilized bones or treat-filled Kongs. Put on a continuous-play tape or other recording of your voice or music.
5. Try setting up the food scavenger hunt mentioned earlier to occupy your dog.
6. Keep all departures and returns low-key. No emotional goodbyes and greetings. This can be hard to accomplish, but you must be firm here to achieve results.

Extra Tips For Anxiety Barkers

Anxiety barkers can be extremely frustrating for your family, and downright intolerable for neighbors. Some anxiety barkers start barking when you leave and stop when you return home, which means you can have a falling out with your neighbors without even

realizing it! In some areas you can even be fined for incessant barkers, so there can be a hit to your wallet as well! Try the tips below for an anxiety barker:

- Do not give your dog any attention, not even eye contact, for any type of vocalization.
- Block visual access to things that trigger your dog's barking.
- Catch your dog in the act of barking. Say 'OFF!' and use a startle technique (such as a loud clap or other unpleasant, interruptive noise). After the dog has stopped barking, quietly say "Good Quiet," then allow for another minute of silence before rewarding the dog with a combination of verbal praise and a food tidbit, light petting or other incentive. Stay calm, low key and quiet yourself during this process.
- Randomly reward your dog when they are not vocalizing in any way. This "catching my dog in the act of being good" requires attentiveness on your part. Pass near your dog, toss a treat and say "Good Quiet." The dog learns that it will be rewarded for quiet behavior and be unpleasantly startled for noisy behavior. These discipline techniques are not meant to be used frequently, or as the only technique to quiet a barking or anxious dog, but they are helpful in combination with other recommended steps.
- Set up a tape recorder or video recorder to track the times your dog tends to bark. Or if you have a helpful, reliable neighbor, ask that person to listen and let you know when your dog tends to have barking spells. There is usually a pattern, and in knowing this you can work to break it.

Diet Tips For Anxious Dogs

- A diet switch can help, such as from a high-protein, high-energy food to a

low-protein all-natural diet without any artificial preservatives.

- Feed twice per day to keep the dog from getting hungry and to avoid any mood swings that can result from low blood sugar.
- Trying feeding the biggest meal before the separation-anxious dog is about to spend a lengthy period of time alone. After eating, dogs often get sleepy. However, it is essential that you give a good, long, brisk walk before you leave your dog alone so that they can eliminate after the meal.

Alternative Health Aids

- Holistic options include valerian root and kava-kava, as well as a number of fear flower essences by Bach.
- Rescue Remedy and other gentle, natural ingredient-based remedies are available at most health food stores and over the internet. Many people find that these safe, affordable choices help calm their dogs.
- Some veterinarians have successfully used the homeopathic remedy Pulsatilla. It doesn't cure the problem, but seems to reduce the symptoms of frantic barking and destructiveness.
- For more serious cases, some have had success using Melatonin.

Other Helpful Measures To Try

If you have diligently and consistently tried out the advice in this book up to this point, and have had your dog checked out to make sure there are no underlying medical conditions causing their behavior, then here are a few more suggestions to try. Although these suggestions are not the most convenient and may not fit in with your current lifestyle, with a particularly difficult dog you may have little choice. If you love your dog

(and if you have read this far then you must!) you will always find a way to make it work!

- Find an at home neighbor or pet walker to visit your dog.
- Come home for lunch
- Take your dog to work
- Pet sitter
- Pet day care
- Day boarding for dogs who don't play well with others
- Neutering: it won't solve the problem, but can reduce anxiety overall since the dog will no longer be subject to raging hormones

How Can I Prevent Anxiety Disorders In The First Place?

When you bring your dog or puppy home for the first time, acclimatize them to periods of time away from you by practicing departures and brief absences. If you get into the habit of providing your dog with a loaded food, your dog may even look forward to you leaving! Only give treats as you leave, however, not upon your arrival home.

As mentioned above, make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise. To help them learn to relax after playing, give your dog gentle massages. You should also challenge your dog mentally by working on obedience training and problem solving (such as a game of hide-and-seek). All of these activities, both physical and mental, help to build the dog's confidence and make them less anxious in general.

Dogs evolved as companions to people, and they are pack animals. However, owner/guardians need to help their dogs find a healthy balance between enjoying

companionship and becoming sufficiently independent to tolerate being alone for periods of time.

People must condition their dogs to stay calm when left alone. To condition means to get the dog used to specific things, situations and events. That's why it's important to practice leaving and returning to the dog frequently, starting when you first bring the dog into your home and family.

Teach your dog from the start that your leaving the house is an ordinary, regular event. Help your dog build tolerance for your departures and absences.

When you first bring your dog home, take them into the yard first and then into the house. Inside the house, show your dog around. Particularly with a male dog, watch and be prepared to say "NO!" at the first sign of the dog getting ready to lift his leg to mark something. Then offer the dog a treat for being good. Next, take your dog outside to go again and take them to the same potty spot. This helps your dog to start learning the concept of "going outside".

Have the dog's bed and bowl of water ready in a safe, well-lit, comfortable confined area with "family smells", such as a gated-off kitchen, family room or crate placed in a family area (do not confine your dog in basements, garages, storage rooms, or other non-family areas). This nice "den" will be the place in which your dog will stay when you are not home to supervise. Take your dog to that place, tell them to lie down (guide your dog if they have not yet learned that command). Then give them one or two safe chew toys and praise them. You can couple a food treat with a verbal praise such as 'Good Dog'. In fact, it's helpful to keep a small bag of tiny tidbit treats on you at all times during the acclimation and training phases.

Next, close the door or gate to the room or crate, and step back. See if your dog is staying calm. If so, resist the urge to talk to your dog, since that will distract them from this desired, calm, relaxed behavior.

Leave the room for 5 seconds. Return. Gradually, increase the duration of your absence by very small increments.

If your dog stays reasonably calm when separated from you for a minute or two, let them stay there as long as they seem to be comfortable. As soon as you notice any signs of the dog growing anxious or uncomfortable, take them outside again for a walk or a short play session.

If the dog is well behaved in their confined area, this is a very good sign. You can begin to add calm, quiet verbal praise and an occasional food treat to this acclimation routine as a reward for being good and calm in their confined area. When you release your dog from the room or crate, do so in a low-key manner; it's best to give no response at all when the dog comes out of the crate for the first minute or so. This is part of establishing the confined place as a secure den, vs. a jail from which they desire to escape from.

By the way, another good idea is to rotate the safe chew toys that you give your dog each day. Also, include interactive toys into the mix!

Next, leave the room for increasingly longer periods.

Realize that this important acclimation training will take some time and patience; you will need to repeat these activities for a few days in the effort to anxiety-proof your dog.

Next step: leave the house and come back in right away. Progressively lengthen these outings until you can know that your dog displays no anxiety about your departures - which means your dog realizes that when you leave them, you always return eventually.

Note: it is important, particularly during this acclimation phase, to make sure you do not leave your dog alone any longer than it can reasonably, comfortably wait to urinate. If you leave your dog alone so long that they feel discomfort about "holding it", or gets

hungry or scared, you are teaching your dog that they do have reasons to worry when you leave. You, of course, want your dog to learn the opposite: that they can trust you, as the pack leader, and that you will always return in time to properly take care of them.

Gradually lengthen your absences to 15 minutes, then 30 minutes, then longer. Hopefully, your dog will not get anxious since you have been conditioning them to accept your absences as a normal part of life. Your dog will learn to be confident that you will return, and also, they will learn that it is you who decides what happens and when.

It's good to stay in range the first few days of this acclimation exercise so that you can tell if and when your dog shows signs of anxiety.

If at any point your dog begins showing anxiety about your departure, go back to a shorter absence and continue working to build their confidence. And at any time, now or after the acclimation phase, if you come home and find that your dog experienced anxious behavior (through evidence of scratching, digging, chewing, barking, pools of drool, etc.) halve the time you leave the dog alone for awhile and work to increase the time increments again slowly. If your dog continues displaying anxiety symptoms, cut the time in half again, then start to build it up again.

This acclimation process is worth the time it takes, because starting out right will set the pace for your dog, accustom them to their "home-alone" environment, and help ward off potential adjustment problems. Because of the time that these acclimation exercises involve, it's usually best for working folks to arrange for some vacation time when getting a new dog, or to bring the dog home on a Friday just before your weekend begins.

Attention is good, but you also need to educate your dog so that they are ready for your real-world routine. The common failure to help dogs adjust leads to unrealistic expectations and often, anxiety when you suddenly leave on that first workday after

getting the dog.

In general, it is always best to set the ground rules upfront - and stick to them fairly and consistently. You can loosen up later if you wish, but tightening up is really hard after your dog is inadvertently conditioned to getting out of control.

Chapter 5

Crating - A Preventive Measure For Separation Anxiety For Pet Owners With Space Constraints

Crating Philosophy

Crate training uses a dog's natural instincts as a den animal. A wild dog's den is their home, a place to sleep, hide from danger and raise a family. The crate becomes your dog's den, an ideal spot to snooze or take refuge during a thunderstorm.



- The primary use for a crate is housetraining. Dogs don't like to soil their dens.
- The crate can limit access to the rest of the house while your dog learns other rules, like not to chew on furniture.
- Crates are a safe way to transport your dog in the car.

If your dog is seriously destructive to your house, you may have to confine it while you modify their behavior. Crates come in many different styles and sizes. The best one for you will depend on your dog. Crates can cost \$50 and more for a medium sized one to over \$100 for a large size and are well worth the investment. An appropriate and sturdy crate, bought when your dog is a puppy, will last a lifetime.

Crating Expectations

Training crates for dogs are too often deemed cruel when in fact, they are both training and safety devices and as such, can benefit dog and owner alike. Crating on a humane schedule teaches puppies bladder and bowel control and limits a teething demon to his own property. A dog crated in a car has a better chance of surviving an auto accident and little chance of causing one.

You will also find the welcome mat out at more inns and motels if you promise to crate your dog whenever you leave the room. Besides, the dog will feel more comfortable when left alone if they are in their own "den."

Dog crates come in all sizes, many colors, and different styles. The most common are molded-plastic airline shipping crates and the open-wire types that usually come with a metal tray on the bottom. For owners who plan to do a lot of air travel with their dogs or for those whose dogs prefer dark, cozy places, the molded-plastic variety is best. Wire crates are preferred in most other instances.

The size of the crate is based on the size of your dog. There should be enough room for your dog to stand up, turn around in a small circle, and lie down comfortably. The crate serves as a place where the dog can rest and chew on safe, appropriate toys. It is not an exercise pen.

If you plan to use the crate as a housebreaking aid, size is of paramount importance. If there is room for Rex to soil and then lay high and dry away from the mess, the crate cannot serve its purpose. Those buying crates for puppies should keep the adult dog's size in mind; but until the pup grows up, excess room should be cordoned off in some manner. Masonite, Plexiglas, or even old wire refrigerator shelves can serve as barriers.

Dog-Den Afternoons

How long can a dog be crated in one session? The rule of thumb for crating is no longer than one hour per each month of age, up to nine to ten hours maximum (the average work day). Each session should be preceded and succeeded by an hour of aerobic exercise. If this is too long for your dog, hire a dog walker to exercise them midday.

Before you can leave your dog for the long stretch, make sure you have accustomed them to the crate. A dog that panics when left alone in a crate could damage the crate and, more seriously, harm itself. Never crate your dog while it is wearing any sort of correction collar—it could easily get caught on something in the crate and choke the animal.

Crating For Young Puppies

Young puppies need lots of human stimulus and feedback, so avoid relying too heavily on the crate in the early months. Most puppies, three and a half to four months old, can be crated overnight for about six hours, even though they probably cannot yet display that kind of bladder control during the daytime. Younger dogs crated at bedtime will need to be brought to their papers or outdoors at least once in the middle of the night.

Crating is recommended as part of the workday routine until the dog grows out of adolescence, at approximately 18 months of age, for dogs that are heavy chewers or are otherwise destructive. This is a time of behavioral inconsistency and learning through trial and error. Proceed slowly when it's time to wean your dog off the crate; leave them alone for just a few hours at a time.

Think twice before leaving a curious adolescent at liberty in your house. Your dog may behave perfectly for a few weeks and then one day you might come home to find the place in a shambles.

A crate can provide peace of mind for both you and your dog. Think of it as a leash with walls. After all, both pieces of equipment serve to protect your dog from their own base instincts and errors in judgment. By crating your dog during the workday, you ensure they receive a royal welcome on your arrival home.

Crates are only temporary solutions and dogs should not remain in them for more than a few hours at a time. Although it may seem cruel to confine a dog, many dogs feel secure in their crates and the den-like confined space can help them doze off.

Make sure you have crate-trained your dog before you leave it alone for any length of time. The crate should be a place of security and pleasant experiences and never a punishment or a prison.

When Not To Use Crates

Not all dogs take to crates. Some dogs are claustrophobic and will suffer even more when confined to a crate. They may do better in a room with a view and sometimes even better if given the run of the house, but with the additional behavior modification as discussed in this article. If your dog claws at the crate door, bites the bars and shows excessive distress at being placed in a crate, the crate is probably not a good option for your dog.

Selecting A Crate

Several types of crates are available:

- Plastic (often called "flight kennels")
- Fabric on a collapsible, rigid frame
- Collapsible, metal pens

Crates come in different sizes and can be purchased at most pet supply stores or pet supply catalogs.

Your dog's crate should be just large enough for them to stand up and turn around in. If your dog is still growing, choose a crate size that will accommodate their adult size. Block off the excess crate space so your dog can't eliminate at one end and retreat to the other.

Your local animal shelter may rent out crates. By renting, you can trade up to the appropriate size for your puppy until it has reached adult size, when you can then invest in a permanent crate.



Crating caution!

- ✓ Never use the crate as a punishment. Your dog will come to fear it and refuse to enter it.
- ✓ Don't leave your dog in the crate too long.
- ✓ Puppies under six months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time.
- ✓ Crate your dog only until you can trust him not to destroy the house.



The Crate Training Process

Crate training can take days or weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament and past experiences. It's important to keep two things in mind while crate training:

- The crate should always be associated with something pleasant.
- Training should take place in a series of small steps. Don't go too fast.

Step 1: Introduce your dog to the crate

Place the crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time, such as the family room. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Take the door off and let the dog explore the crate at their leisure. Some dogs will be naturally curious and start sleeping in the crate right away. If yours is not one of them, try the following:

- Bring the dog over to the crate, and talk to them in a happy tone of voice. Make sure the crate door is open and secured, so that it won't hit your dog and frighten it.
- Encourage your dog to enter the crate by dropping some small food treats nearby, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. If your dog refuses to go all the way in at first, that's okay; don't force them to enter.
- Continue tossing treats into the crate until your dog will walk calmly all the way into the crate to get the food. If your dog isn't interested in treats, try tossing a favorite toy in the crate. This step may take a few minutes or as long as several days.

Step 2: Feed your dog all its meals in the crate

After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding it all regular meals near the crate. This will create a pleasant association with the crate.

- If your dog is readily entering the crate when you begin Step 2, place the food dish all the way at the back of the crate.
- If your dog remains reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far inside as your pet will readily enter without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed your dog, place the dish a little further back in the crate.

- Once your dog is standing comfortably in the crate to eat their meal, you can close the door while it is eating. The first time you do this, open the door as soon as your dog finishes its meal. With each subsequent feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer until they stay in the crate for ten minutes or so after eating.
- If your dog begins to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving your dog in the crate for a shorter time period. If your dog whines while in the crate, don't let them out until they stop. Otherwise, your dog will learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine. Again, you must be firm in your approach during these phases of training.

Step 3: Lengthen crating periods

After your dog is eating their regular meals in the crate with no sign of fear or anxiety, you can confine them there for short time periods while you're at home.

- Call your dog over to the crate and give it a treat.
- Give your dog a command to enter, such as "Kennel." Encourage your dog by pointing to the inside of the crate with a treat in your hand.
- After your dog enters the crate, praise them, give them the treat, and close the door.
- Sit quietly near the crate for five to ten minutes, and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a short time, and then let your dog out of the crate.
- Repeat this process several times a day, gradually increasing the length of time you leave your dog in the crate and the length of time you're out of his sight.

- Once your dog will stay quietly in the crate for about 30 minutes with you mostly out of sight, you can begin leaving them crated when you're gone for short periods of time and/or letting your dog sleep in the crate at night. This may take several days or several weeks depending on your dog. Make sure you stick with it and be consistent!

Step 4, Part A: Crate your dog when you leave

After your dog can spend about 30 minutes in the crate without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving them crated for short periods when you leave the house.

- Put your dog in the crate using your regular command and a treat. You might also want to leave your dog with a few safe toys in the crate.
- Vary at what point in your "getting ready to leave" routine you put your dog in the crate. Although they shouldn't be in a crate for a long time before you leave, you can crate them anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes prior to leaving.
- Don't make your departures emotional and prolonged—they should be matter-of-fact. Praise your dog briefly, give them a treat for entering the crate, and then leave quietly.

When you return home, don't reward your dog for excited behavior by responding to them in an excited, enthusiastic way. Keep arrivals low key to avoid increasing their anxiety over when you will return. Continue to crate your dog for short periods from time-to-time when you're at home so it doesn't associate crating with being left alone.

Step 4, Part B: Crating the dog at night

Put your dog in the crate using your regular command and a treat. Initially, it may be a good idea to put the crate in your bedroom or nearby in a hallway, especially if you have

a puppy. Puppies often need to go outside to eliminate during the night, and you'll want to be able to hear your puppy when it whines to be let outside.

Older dogs, too, should initially be kept nearby so they don't associate the crate with social isolation.

Once your dog is sleeping comfortably through the night in their crate near you, you can begin to gradually move it to the location you prefer, although time spent with your dog—even sleep time—is a chance to strengthen the bond between you and your pet. This is very important indeed!

Potential Problems During Crate Training

Whining

If your dog whines or cries while in the crate at night, it may be difficult to decide whether they are whining to be let out of the crate, or whether they need to be let outside to eliminate. If you've followed the training procedures outlined above, then your dog hasn't been rewarded for whining in the past by being released from the crate. If that is the case, try to ignore the whining. If your dog is just testing you, it will probably stop whining fairly quickly. Yelling at your dog or pounding on the crate will only make things worse, so never do this.

If the whining continues after you've ignored your dog for several minutes, use the phrase your dog associates with going outside to eliminate. If your dog responds and becomes excited, take them outside for a bathroom break. This should be a trip with a purpose, not play time. If you're convinced that your dog doesn't need to eliminate, the best response is to ignore them until they stop whining. Don't give in; if you do, you'll teach your dog to whine loud and long to get what they want. If you've progressed gradually through the training steps and haven't done too much too soon, you will be

less likely to encounter this problem. If the problem becomes unmanageable, you may need to start the crate training process over again.

Crating Is A Prevention To Developing Separation Anxiety, Not A Cure!

Do not use crating as a remedy for separation anxiety but as a training tool against separation anxiety developing in the first place! I learned this the hard way with my dog Peter.

A crate should not be used for separation-anxious dogs unless the dog is first gradually and successfully accustomed to spending time in the crate and then gradually, successfully accustomed to being alone in the crate - relaxed, not nervous or frantic. Many separation-anxious dogs cannot be in a crate when alone because it fuels their anxiety even more and results in a substantial setback in the effort to condition the dog to accept your absences. Your mileage may vary here, and it is important to try all of the techniques described in this book until you find something that works well for your dog.

Thus, attempting to use the crate as a remedy for separation anxiety won't solve the problem. A crate may prevent your dog from being destructive, but it may injure itself in an attempt to escape from the crate. Separation anxiety problems can only be resolved with counter-conditioning and desensitization procedures. Follow the guidelines and tips throughout this book, and you should be on your way to success!

Useful Crating Tips

Your goal is to condition the dog to be relaxed and comfortable in a specific room or crate where it will remain while you are away. However, crating regularly for 6 hours or more can be counterproductive and ineffective (even if the dog can physically hold its urine that long). Also, while you can use crates for time-outs, never banish dogs to crates as punishment. You want the crate to always have positive associations.

When using a crate for your new pup or newly adopted dog, practice using the crate when you are at home. Make the crate homely. Place it in a pleasant family area with light and nice view. Some dogs like to see outside and for others, such visibility leads to over-excitement, so find out what works for your dog.

To acclimatize your dog to the crate from the start, show them that "all good things happen in the crate." Entice the dog into the crate and immediately provide a toy that contains something edible, such as a Kong stuffed with kibble adhered with some peanut butter, or a Buster Cube filled with kibble. One smart tip is to feed the dog a meal via the Kong or cube. Go sit down with a book or watch TV nearby. Let your dog out when it is calm and quiet. Resist the urge to let a dog out of a crate when barking or displaying other anxiety symptoms, because that rewards the unwanted behavior you're trying to avoid or eliminate.

When acclimatizing your dog to a crate, give lots of positives for entering and staying calming in the crate. You don't even have to close the door each time, although you will want to practice getting the dog accustomed to the crate door being closed and latched.

Give no response when the dog comes out of the crate for the first minute or so. Many people mistakenly give dogs a rousing, ebullient response when exiting the crate, but that tends to reinforce the idea that being out is infinitely better than being in. While the dog probably realizes this, you don't need to amplify the message. When crate training, you want the dog to think "this is my special place, and I like it here."

The Final Word

Dogs are extremely adorable pets that tend to get attached to their owners in a very short span of time and blend with every other member of the family. They are faithful friends and love you unconditionally, and you develop a sense of pride to own such a caring animal as your pet.

The companionship of a pet is something that humans have been blessed with for thousands of years. Dogs have worked by our sides, and provided us with endless affection and love. There is an incredible bond between humans and their ever-faithful companions that cannot always be explained. Most of the time, it can only be felt with the heart. Not only do animals provide us with physical and social benefits, they also help on an emotional level that enriches our lives.

Nurturing a pet makes one feel needed. It gives you a reason to get up on days you may not feel like it. The dog needs to be fed and let out. Having this responsibility gives you a sense of accomplishment. The wonderful thing about a pet is they are always so happy you care for them and they ask for nothing in return. For senior citizens, having an animal can help take away their loneliness and give them a reason for living.

Having a pet makes a home feel like a safe haven for single men and women and also for those who do not like to be alone while their spouse or roommate is working or not at home. If you do not like to be alone when your spouse/roommate is gone, having a dog may help you feel less anxious because you feel safe knowing your dog will protect you.

The stress of your day will just melt away when you open your front door to a wagging tail. You can't help but smile when your dog is happy to see you. Petting your dog can melt away your problems and worries and possibly help you put all your challenges into perspective.

Pets teach us to never ever judge others without reason, and make us laugh with their funny antics. They always trust and love us unconditionally and make us feel needed. One can see why they have such a powerful and positive impact on our lives.

With such beautiful companions who bring so much zest to our lives it is our moral responsibility to make them feel healthy from both body and mind, both externally and internally.

Leaving pets abandoned is not the solution. The fact that you have made an attempt to read this manual to help your pet is, in itself, a great move on your part to help your dog overcome their separation anxiety disorder. Yes, it can be stressful to have an unhealthy pet around but being patient in such testing times tests the strength of our character.

Separation anxiety can be cured with time, and you will get your cheerful pet back. This will be sure to provide much more enjoyment for you and your dog.

Having a pet is a lifelong bond and rectifying such challenges can only strengthen this.

I wish you all the best and wonderful times ahead with your pet!

Stephanie Abel