

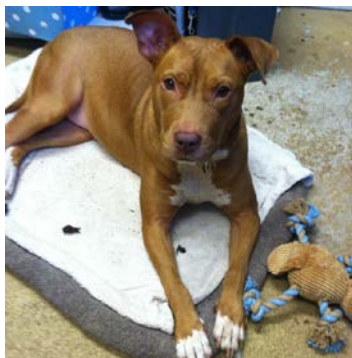


## Canine Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety can be mild moderate or severe. If you believe you're your dog has moderate to severe anxiety we highly recommend working with one of our recommended experts. By consulting with a knowledgeable expert, you can determine the best course of action for your pet. Sometimes simple boredom is actually misdiagnosed as separation anxiety. Take into consideration how much physical and mental stimulation your dog has daily. If it is not enough, you may want to make those changes first, especially if you have a young dog. If your dog is getting plenty of exercise and you have ruled out medical issues, your dog may have separation anxiety. Common symptoms of separation anxiety include:

- Panting, trembling, drooling
- Actions to make leaving difficult for the owner such as hiding
- Vocalizations such as: howling, barking whining
- Attempting escape
- Urinating or defecating in crate
- Refusal of what is usually a reinforce (food, toys etc)

Dogs will show these signs immediately and the anxiety may continue until someone returns depending on how severe the anxiety is. The reason dogs have anxiety varies. It may be genetics, a learned behavior, a behavior triggered by an event, or having never been left alone. Since our dogs cannot speak to tell us why, it is best to be proactive and find ways to manage and alter the behavior.



## What can help?

- Preventing boredom- Be sure to provide your dog with plenty of exercise both mental and physical. As stated previously, a bored dog may become destructive or frustrated
- Consult with a professional, especially if your dog is endangering himself- A qualified expert will develop a program for your dog that will focus on management, using methods to build your relationship and desensitize. They may possibly work with a veterinarian to prescribe medication
- Crate training for mild anxiety- Sometimes destructive behavior is caused by too much freedom. Refer to our crate training handout for more information
- Calming products such as:
  - ✓ DAP collars- Dog appeasing pheromone collars. Found online or most pet stores.
  - ✓ Rescue Remedy- [www.bachflower.com](http://www.bachflower.com)
  - ✓ Harmonease - [www.harmoneasevet.com](http://www.harmoneasevet.com)
  - ✓ Thundershirts- [www.thundershirt.com](http://www.thundershirt.com)
  - ✓ Blackwing Farms - [www.blackwingfarms.com](http://www.blackwingfarms.com)
- Make your departure valuable - Frozen stuffed Kong's that are only given when you depart can help build a better association with you leaving
- Consistent schedules- Dogs thrive on consistency. Inconsistent feeding, walk and crate times are not ideal
- Confidence and independence building exercises- Nose work, fun classes, sitting for feeding and more can help your dog develop a better state of mind
- Low key departures and arrivals- When you leave or arrive, try to keep a neutral attitude. This reinforces that the former and the latter are not such a big deal
- Background noise- TV or radio can help your dog adjust
- Try not to become frustrated- While it can be upsetting, the behaviors are not done "out of spite". Do not punish your dog as this can increase behaviors and anxiety

Here are recommended books about the topic:

I'll Be Home Soon! - How to Prevent and Treat Separation Anxiety by Patricia McConnell

Treating Separation Anxiety in Dogs by Malena Demartini-Price, CTC

Don't Leave Me - Step-By-Step Help for Your Dog's Separation Anxiety by Nicole Wilde