



Paws For Thought

Separation Anxiety can be stressful and upsetting for many families. How to we avoid it?

Separation anxiety can be extremely stressful on both the dog and the owner. The dog's complete inability to cope with being left alone can make some dog owners feel virtually trapped.

The inability to cope may stem from a lack of self-confidence on the dog's part and can arise at any time, in any breed. The pet parent may also have some confidence issue that may transfer to their pooch. However, the cause is usually an owner who is trying to do the right thing and wants only the best for their dog. They spend a lot of time with the pup while they are raising it. More and more people have home offices and in these more casual times, many dogs are taken to places of employment.

All this adds up to an abundance of attention not usually for anything in particular that the dog has done, just for being around and being so darn cute. We all fall into that on occasion.

This scenario has a slight change if the dog is a rescue or rehomed dog. Many of these are taken in by kind people who want to turn the dog's life around (thank goodness these people are out there!). This dog may have spend a lot of time alone and then very abruptly becomes the centre of attention.

Either way your dog develops it, the end result is the same, a dog who when left alone barks constantly, whines, destroys your home, urinates and defecates upon your departure and a dog who is extremely needy when you are home.



One factor contributing to separation anxiety is the fact that in your dogs eyes you are “all or nothing”, meaning while you are at home, your dog is often the centre of everything you do. Many dogs are greeted at the door first, even before the spouse.

Many dogs are constantly touched, talked to, played with while the owner is home. And then their person leaves it instantly becomes silent.

How you can help. Your dog must learn to be on his own even while you are there. You can't be your dog's only source of entertainment. This is extremely difficult to do, it is very hard on your heart but your dog is worth the effort. This will help your dog find coping strategies. Scheduling in a “pup break” during the day will help. This is a period of time when you are off duty. You are both home but your dog is learning the art of doing nothing and to settle on their bed. Which is a good skill to have.

Keep in mind that excessive barking does not necessarily mean that a dog has separation anxiety, he might be barking for other reasons such as attention seeking or boredom.

Some dogs simply like to hear the sound of their own voice!

A big problem in dealing with and eventually eradicating separation anxiety is that many dog owners feel their dog will not love them if they do not pay constant attention to him. This is very far from the truth, your dog will still love you and you will have added respect and when you have respect from your dog you will see an enormous change in your bond together, for