



Reducing Separation Anxiety in Dogs

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EVERYONE NEEDS A LITTLE TIME ALONE NOW AND THEN—unless of course you are a dog who suffers from separation anxiety. Dogs with separation anxiety exhibit behavior problems when they're left alone. Typically, they'll have a dramatic anxiety response within a short time (20–45 minutes) after their owners leave them. The most common of these behaviors are:

- ✦ Digging, chewing, and scratching at doors or windows in an attempt to escape and reunite with their owners
- ✦ Howling, barking, and crying in an attempt to get their owners to return
- ✦ Urination and defecation (even with housetrained dogs) as a result of distress
- ✦ The behavior occurs exclusively or primarily when he's left alone.
- ✦ He follows you from room to room whenever you're home.
- ✦ He displays effusive, frantic greeting behaviors.
- ✦ The behavior always occurs when he's left alone, whether for a short or long period of time.
- ✦ He reacts with excitement, depression, or anxiety to your preparations to leave the house.
- ✦ He dislikes spending time outdoors by himself.

Why Do Dogs Suffer from Separation Anxiety?

We don't fully understand why some dogs suffer from separation anxiety and, under similar circumstances, others don't. It's important to realize, however, that the destruction and house soiling that often occur with separation anxiety are not the dog's attempt to punish or seek revenge on his owner for leaving him alone. In reality, they are part of a panic response.

Separation Anxiety Sometimes Occurs:

- ✦ When a dog accustomed to constant human companionship is left alone for the first time
- ✦ Following a long interval, such as a vacation, during which the owner and dog are 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
- ✦ After a change in the family's routine or structure (such as a child leaving for college, a change in work schedule, a move to a new home, or a new pet or person in the home)

How Do I Know If My Dog Has Separation Anxiety?

Because there are many reasons for the behaviors associated with separation anxiety, it's essential to correctly diagnose the reason for the behavior before proceeding with treatment. If most, or all, of the following statements are true about your dog, he may have a separation anxiety problem:

What to Do If Your Dog Has Separation Anxiety

For a minor separation anxiety problem, the following techniques may be helpful by themselves. For more severe problems, these techniques should be used along with the desensitization process described in the next section.

- ✦ Keep arrivals and departures low-key. For example, when you arrive home, ignore your dog for the first few minutes, then calmly pet him. This may be hard for you to do, but it's important!
- ✦ Leave your dog with an article of clothing that smells like you—such as an old t-shirt that you've slept in recently.
- ✦ Establish a "safety cue"—a word or action that you use every time you leave that tells your dog you'll be back. Dogs usually learn to associate certain cues with short absences by their owners. For example, when you take out the garbage, your dog knows you come right back and doesn't become anxious. Therefore, it's helpful to associate a safety cue with your short-duration absences.

Some examples of safety cues are a playing radio, a playing television, or a toy (one that doesn't have dangerous fillings and can't be torn into pieces). Use your safety cue during practice sessions with your dog. Be sure to avoid presenting your dog with the safety cue when you leave for a period

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of time longer than he can tolerate; if you do, the value of the safety cue will be lost. Leaving a radio on to provide company for your dog isn't particularly useful by itself, but a playing radio may work if you've used it consistently as a safety cue in your practice sessions. If your dog engages in destructive chewing as part of his separation distress, offering him a chewing item as a safety cue is a good idea. Very hard rubber toys that can be stuffed with treats and Nylabone®-like products are good choices.

Desensitization Techniques for More Severe Cases of Separation Anxiety

The primary treatment for more severe cases of separation anxiety is a systematic process of getting your dog used to being alone. You must teach your dog to remain calm during "practice" departures and short absences. We recommend the following procedure:

- ❖ Begin by engaging in your normal departure activities (getting your keys, putting on your coat), then sit back down. Repeat this step until your dog shows no distress in response to your activities.
- ❖ Next, engage in your normal departure activities and go to the door and open it, then sit back down.
- ❖ Next, step outside the door, leaving the door open, then return.
- ❖ Finally, step outside, close the door, then immediately return. Slowly get your dog accustomed to being alone with the door closed between you for several seconds.
- ❖ Proceed very gradually from step to step, repeating each step until your dog shows no signs of distress. The number of repetitions will vary depending on the severity of the problem. If at any time in this process your actions produce an anxiety response in your dog, you've proceeded too fast. Return to an earlier step in the process and practice this step until the dog shows no distress response, then proceed to the next step.
- ❖ Once your dog is tolerating your being on the other side of the door for several seconds, begin short-duration absences. This step involves giving the dog a verbal cue (for example, "I'll be back"), leaving, and then returning within a minute. Your return must be low-key: Either ignore your dog or greet him quietly and calmly. If he shows no signs of distress, repeat the exercise. If he appears anxious, wait until he relaxes to repeat the exercise. Gradually increase the length of time you're gone.
- ❖ Practice as many absences as possible that last less than 10 minutes. You can do many departures within one session if your dog relaxes sufficiently between departures. You should also scatter practice departures and short-duration absences throughout the day.
- ❖ Once your dog can handle short absences (30-90 minutes), he'll usually be able to handle longer intervals alone, and you won't have to repeat this process every time you are

planning a longer absence. The hard part is at the beginning, but the job gets easier as you go along. Nevertheless, you must go slowly at first. How long it takes to condition your dog to being alone depends on the severity of his problem.

Teaching the Sit-Stay and Down-Stay

Another technique for reducing separation anxiety in your dog is practicing the common "sit-stay" or "down-stay" training exercises using positive reinforcement. Your goal is to be able to move briefly out of your dog's sight while he remains in the "stay" position and thereby teach your dog that he can remain calmly and happily in one place while you go to another. To do this, you gradually increase the distance you move away from your dog. As you progress, you can do this during the course of your normal daily activities. For example, if you're watching television with your dog by your side and you get up for a snack, tell him to stay, and leave the room. When you come back, give him a treat or praise him quietly. Never punish your dog during these training sessions.

Interim Solutions

Because the treatments described above can take a while, and because a dog with separation anxiety can do serious damage to himself or your home in the interim, consider these suggestions to help you and your dog cope in the short term.

- ❖ Consult your veterinarian about the possibility of drug therapy. A good anti-anxiety drug should not sedate your dog, but simply reduce his anxiety while you're gone. Such medication is a temporary measure and should be used in conjunction with behavior modification techniques.
- ❖ Take your dog to a dog day care facility or boarding kennel.
- ❖ Leave your dog with a friend, family member, or neighbor.
- ❖ Take your dog to work with you, even for half a day, if possible.

What Won't Help a Separation Anxiety Problem

- ❖ Punishing your dog. Punishment is not an effective way to treat separation anxiety. In fact, punishing your dog after you return home may actually increase his separation anxiety.
- ❖ Getting another pet as a companion for your dog. This usually doesn't help an anxious dog because his anxiety is the result of his separation from you, his person, not merely the result of being alone.
- ❖ Crating your dog. Your dog will still engage in anxiety responses in the crate. He may urinate, defecate, howl, or even injure himself in an attempt to escape from the crate.
- ❖ Leaving the radio on (unless the radio is used as a "safety cue," as described above).
- ❖ Training your dog. While formal training is always a good idea, it won't directly help a separation anxiety problem. Separation anxiety is not the result of disobedience or lack of training; it's a panic response.

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Positive Reinforcement

Training Your Dog (or Cat!) with Treats and Praise

WE ALL LIKE TO BE PRAISED rather than punished. The same is true for your pet, and that's the theory behind positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement means giving your pet something pleasant or rewarding immediately after she does something you want her to do. Because your praise or reward makes her more likely to repeat that behavior in the future, it is one of your most powerful tools for shaping or changing your pet's behavior.

Correct timing is essential when using positive reinforcement. The reward must occur immediately—within seconds—or your pet may not associate it with the proper action. For example, if you have your dog “sit” but reward her after she’s already stood back up, she’ll think she’s being rewarded for standing up.

Consistency is also essential. Everyone in the family should use the same commands. It might help to post these where everyone can become familiar with them. The most commonly used commands for dogs are:

- ☒ “Sit”
- ☒ “Stay”
- ☒ “Down” (which means “lie down”)
- ☒ “Off” (which means “get off of me” or “get off the furniture”)
- ☒ “Stand”
- ☒ “Come”
- ☒ “Heel” (or “let’s go” or “with me”)
- ☒ “Leave it”
- ☒ “Settle”
- ☒ “Watch me”

Consistency means always rewarding the desired behavior and never rewarding undesired behavior.

Using Positive Reinforcement

For your pet, positive reinforcement may include food treats, praise, petting, or a favorite toy or game. Food treats work especially well for training your dog. A treat should be enticing and irresistible to your pet. It should be a very small, soft piece of food, so that she will immediately gulp it down and look to you for more. If you give her something she has to chew or that breaks into bits and falls on the floor, she’ll be looking around the floor, not at you. Small pieces of soft commercial treats, hot dogs, cheese, or cooked chicken or beef have all proven successful. Experiment to see what works best for your pet. You can carry the treats in a pocket or fanny pack. Each time you use a food reward, you should couple it with a verbal reward (praise). Say something like, “Good dog,” in a positive, happy tone of voice.

Some pets may not be interested in food treats. For those pets, the reward could be in the form of a toy or brief play.

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When your pet is learning a new behavior, she should be rewarded every time she does the behavior, which means continuous reinforcement. It may be necessary to use a technique called "shaping" with your pet, which means reinforcing something close to the desired response and then gradually requiring more from your dog before she gets the treat. For example, if you're teaching your dog to "shake hands," you may initially reward her for lifting her paw off the ground, then for lifting it higher, then for touching your hand, then for letting you hold her paw, and finally, for actually "shaking hands" with you.

Intermittent reinforcement can be used once your pet has reliably learned the behavior. At first, reward her with the treat three out of every four times she does the behavior. Then, over time, reward her about half the time, then about a third of the time, and so on, until you're only rewarding her occasionally with the treat. Continue to praise her every time—although once your dog has learned the behavior, your praise can be less effusive, such as a quiet, but positive, "Good dog." Use a variable schedule of reinforcement so that she doesn't catch on that she only has to respond every other time. Your pet will soon learn that if she keeps responding, eventually she'll get what she wants—your praise and an occasional treat.

By understanding reinforcement, you'll see that you're not forever bound to carry a pocketful of goodies. Your dog will soon be working for your verbal praise, because she really does want to please you and knows that, occasionally, she'll get a treat, too. There are many small opportunities to reinforce her behavior. You may have her "sit" before letting her out the door (which helps prevent door-darting), before petting her (which helps prevent jumping up on people), or before feeding her. Give her a pat or a "Good dog" for lying quietly by your feet, or slip a treat into a Kong®-type toy when she's chewing it instead of your shoe.

The Pros and Cons of Punishment

Punishment can be verbal, postural, or physical, and it means giving your pet something unpleasant immediately after she does something you don't want her to do. The punishment makes it less likely that the behavior will occur again. To be

effective, punishment must be delivered while your pet is engaged in the undesirable behavior—in other words, "caught in the act." If the punishment is delivered too late, even seconds later, your pet will not associate the punishment with the undesired behavior.

Punishment delivered by you may erode your dog's trust. That's why punishment is most effective when it does not come directly from you. For example, after your dog acts in an undesirable way, use a shake can, an air horn, or keys—but don't draw attention to the fact that the noise comes from you. If your dog perceives her "environment," instead of you, to be delivering the punishment, she'll be more likely to avoid the behavior even when you're not around.

In addition, if you're too late in administering it, punishment will seem unpredictable to your dog. She's likely to become fearful, distrustful, or aggressive, which will only lead to more behavior problems. What we humans often interpret as "guilty" looks are actually submissive postures by our pets. Animals don't have a moral sense of right and wrong, but they are adept at associating your presence, and the presence of a mess, with punishment.

If you've tried punishment and it hasn't worked, you should stop using punishment and use only positive reinforcement. And never use physical punishment that involves some level of discomfort or pain, which may cause your pet to bite to defend herself. Holding the neck skin and shaking your dog or performing "alpha rolls" (forcing your dog onto her back and pinning her on the floor) are both likely to result in bites. And punishment might be associated with other stimuli, including people, that are present at the time the punishment occurs. For example, a pet who is punished for getting too close to a small child may become fearful of, or aggressive toward, that child—or toward other children. That's why physical punishment is not only bad for your pet, it's also bad for you and others.

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Related topics at www.petsforlife.org

- Nothing in Life Is Free: A Training Technique for Dogs
- Positive Reinforcement—Training Your Cat

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Crate Training Your Dog

BEHAVIOR SERIES

IF YOU LIKE NOTHING BETTER than coming home from a hard day's work and finding that your dog decided to "go" on the couch or use your favorite slippers as a new chew toy, then crate training isn't for you. But if you're like most people, then using a crate to properly train your dog will be time well spent.

Crate training takes some time and effort, but it is a proven way to help train dogs who act inappropriately without knowing any better. If you have a new dog or puppy, you can use the crate to limit his access to the house until he learns all the house rules—like what he can and can't chew on and where he can and can't eliminate. A crate is also a safe way of transporting your dog in the car or taking him places where he may not be welcome to run freely. If you properly train your dog to use the crate, he'll think of it as his safe place and will be happy to spend time there when needed.

Selecting a Crate

Crates may be plastic (often called "flight kennels") or collapsible, metal pens. They come in different sizes and can be purchased at most pet supply stores. Your dog's crate should be just large enough for him to stand up and turn around in. If your dog is still growing, choose a crate that will accommodate his adult size. Block off the excess crate space so your dog can't eliminate at one end and retreat to the other.

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, and training should take place in a series of small steps. Don't go too fast.

Step 1: Introducing 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. Bring your dog over to the

crate and talk to him 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 him.

- To encourage your dog to enter the crate, drop some small food treats nearby, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. If he refuses to go all the way in at first, that's okay; don't force him 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 he 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: Feeding Your Dog His Meals in the Crate

- After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding him his regular meals near it. 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 he will readily go without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed him, place the dish a little further back in the crate.
- Once your dog is standing comfortably in the crate to eat his meal, you can close the door while he's eating. The first time you do this, open the door as soon as he finishes his meal. With each successive feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until he's staying in the crate for 10 minutes or so after eating. If he begins to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving him in the crate for a shorter time period. If he does whine or cry in the crate, it's imperative that you not let him out until he stops. Otherwise, he'll learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine, so he'll keep doing it.

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Step 3: Conditioning Your Dog to the Crate for Longer Time Periods

- After your dog is eating his regular meals in the crate with no sign of fear or anxiety, you can confine him there for short time periods while you're home. Call him over to the crate and give him a treat. Give him a command to enter, such as "kennel." Encourage him by pointing to the inside of the crate with a treat in your hand. After your dog enters the crate, praise him, give him the treat, and close the door. Sit quietly near the crate for five to 10 minutes and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a short time, then let him out of the crate.
- Repeat this process several times a day. With each repetition, gradually increase the length of time you leave him 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 out of sight the majority of the time, you can begin leaving him crated when you're gone for short time periods or letting him sleep there at night. This may take several days or several weeks.

Step 4, Part A: Crating Your Dog When Left Alone

- After your dog can spend about 30 minutes in the crate without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving him crated for short periods when you leave the house. Put him in the crate using your regular command and a treat. You might also want to leave him with a few safe toys in the crate. You'll want to vary at what point in your "getting ready to leave" routine you put your dog in the crate. Although he shouldn't be crated for a long time before you leave, you can crate him anywhere from five to 20 minutes prior to leaving.
- Don't make your departures emotional and prolonged but matter-of-fact. Praise your dog briefly, give him 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 him in an excited, enthusiastic way. Keep arrivals low-key to avoid increasing his anxiety. Continue to crate your dog for short periods from time to time when you're home so he doesn't associate crating with being left alone.

Step 4, Part B: Crating Your 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 he whines to be let outside.

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- Dog Toys and How to Use Them
- Reducing Separation Anxiety in Dogs

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- Older dogs, too, should initially be kept nearby so that they don't associate the crate with social isolation. Once your dog is sleeping comfortably through the night with his 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.

Potential Problems

Too Much Time in the Crate

A crate isn't a magical solution. If not used correctly, a dog can feel trapped and frustrated. For example, if your dog is crated all day while you're at work and then crated again all night, he's spending too much time in too small a space. Other arrangements should be made to meet his physical and emotional needs. Also remember that puppies under six months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time. They can't control their bladders and bowels for longer periods.

Whining

If your dog whines or cries while in the crate at night, it may be difficult to determine whether he's whining to be let out of the crate or whether he needs 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 his crate. If that is the case, try to ignore the whining. If your dog is just testing you, he'll probably stop whining soon. Yelling at him or pounding on the crate will only make things worse:

If the whining continues after you've ignored him for several minutes, use the phrase he associates with going outside to eliminate. If he responds and becomes excited, take him outside. This should be a trip with a purpose, not playtime. If you're convinced that your dog doesn't need to eliminate, the best response is to ignore him until he stops whining. Don't give in; if you do, you'll teach your dog to whine loud and long to get what he wants. If you've progressed gradually through the training steps and haven't done too much too fast, you'll be less likely to encounter this problem. If the problem becomes unmanageable, you may need to start the crate training process over again.

Separation Anxiety

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 he may injure himself in an attempt to escape from the crate. Separation anxiety problems can only be resolved with counterconditioning and desensitization procedures. You may want to consult a professional animal-behavior specialist.

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Introducing Your New Dog to Your Resident Dog

FROM "THE LEADER OF THE PACK" to "the top dog," plenty of simplistic metaphors come from the canine world. But relationships between canines can be pretty complex, beginning with the very first meeting. Like most animals who live in groups, dogs establish their own social structure, sometimes called a dominance hierarchy. This dominance hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict, and promote cooperation among pack members. Dogs also establish territories, which they may defend against intruders or rivals. Obviously, dogs' social and territorial nature affects their behavior whenever a new dog is introduced to the household.

Introduction Techniques

Choose a Neutral Location

Introduce the dogs in a neutral location so that your resident dog is less likely to view the newcomer as a territorial intruder. Each dog should be handled by a separate person. With both dogs on leashes, begin the introductions in an area unfamiliar to each, such as a park or a neighbor's yard. If you frequently walk your resident dog in a nearby park, she may view that area as her territory, too, so choose a less familiar site. If you are adopting your dog from an animal shelter, you might even bring your resident dog to the local shelter and introduce the two there.

Use Positive Reinforcement

From the first meeting, help both dogs experience "good things" when they're in each other's presence. Let them sniff each other briefly, which is normal canine greeting behavior. As they do, talk to them in a happy, friendly tone of voice; never use a threatening tone. (Don't allow them to investigate and sniff each other for too long, however, as this may escalate to an aggressive response.) After a

short time, get the attention of both dogs and give each a treat in return for obeying a simple command, such as "sit" or "stay." Take the dogs for a walk and let them sniff and investigate each other at intervals. Continue with the "happy talk," food rewards, and simple commands.

Be Aware of Body Postures

One body posture that indicates things are going well is a "play-bow." One dog will crouch with her front legs on the ground and her hind end in the air. This is an invitation to play, and a posture that usually elicits friendly behavior from the other dog. Watch carefully for body postures that indicate an aggressive response, including hair standing up on one dog's back, teeth baring, deep growls, a stiff-legged gait, or a prolonged stare. If you see such postures, interrupt the interaction immediately by calmly getting each dog interested in something else. For example, both handlers can call their dogs to them, have them sit or lie down, and reward each with a treat. The dogs' interest in the treats should prevent the situation from escalating into aggression. Try letting the dogs interact again, but this time for a shorter time period and/or at a greater distance from each other.

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Take the Dogs Home

When the dogs seem to be tolerating each other's presence without fearful or aggressive responses and the investigative greeting behaviors have tapered off, you can take them home. Whether you choose to take them in the same vehicle will depend on their size, how well they ride in the car, how trouble-free the initial introduction has been, and how many dogs are involved.

Space Your Introductions

If you have more than one resident dog in your household, it may be best to introduce the resident dogs to the new dog one at a time. Two or more resident dogs may have a tendency to gang up on the newcomer.

Support the Top Dog

It is important to support the dominant dog in your household, even if that turns out to be the newcomer. This may mean, for example, allowing the dominant dog to claim a favored sleeping spot as his or to have access to a desirable toy. Trying to impose your preference for which dog should be dominant can confuse the dogs and create further problems.

Introducing Puppies to Adult Dogs

Puppies usually pester adult dogs unmercifully. Before the age of four months, puppies may not recognize subtle body postures from adult dogs signaling that they've had enough. Well-socialized adult dogs with good temperaments may set limits with puppies with a warning growl or snarl. These behaviors are normal and should be allowed. Adult dogs who aren't well socialized, or who have a history of fighting with other dogs, may attempt to set limits with more aggressive behaviors, such as biting, which could harm the puppy. For this reason, a puppy shouldn't be left alone with an adult dog until you're confident the puppy isn't in any danger. Be sure to give the adult dog some quiet time away from the puppy and some extra individual attention as well.

When to Get Help

If the introductions don't go smoothly, contact a professional animal behaviorist immediately. Dogs can be severely injured in fights, and the longer the problem continues, the harder it can be to resolve. Punishment won't work and could make things worse. Fortunately, most conflicts between dogs in the same family can be resolved with professional guidance.

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Housetraining Your Puppy

CONTRARY TO popular belief, housetraining a puppy requires far more than a few stacks of old newspapers—it calls for vigilance, patience, and plenty of commitment. By following the procedures outlined below, you can minimize house soiling incidents, but virtually every puppy will have an accident in the house, and more likely, several. Expect this—it's part of raising a puppy. The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, however, the faster your puppy will learn acceptable behavior. It may take several weeks to housetrain your puppy, and with some of the smaller breeds, it might take longer.

Establish a Routine

Like babies, puppies do best on a regular schedule. Take your puppy outside frequently—at least every two hours—and immediately after he wakes up from a nap, after playing, and after eating or drinking.

Praise your puppy lavishly every time he eliminates outdoors—you can even give him a treat—but remember to do so immediately after he's finished eliminating, not after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he'll know what's expected of him.

Pick a bathroom spot near the door, and always take your puppy to that spot using a leash. Take him out for a longer walk or some playtime only after he has eliminated. If you clean up an accident in the house, take the soiled rags or paper towels and leave them in the bathroom spot. The smell will help your puppy recognize the area as the place he is supposed to eliminate. While your puppy is eliminating, use a word or phrase like "go potty" that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him what to do.

Put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule and feed him a high-quality diet to make housetraining easier.

Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed three or four times a day. Feeding your puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that he'll eliminate at consistent times as well, and that makes housetraining easier for both of you.

Keep Your Eyes Peeled

Don't give your puppy an opportunity to soil in the house; keep an eye on him whenever he's indoors. You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates to keep him in the room where you are. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately grab the leash and take him outside to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.

Confinement

When you're unable to watch your puppy at all times, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. The space should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around in. You can use a portion of a bathroom or laundry room blocked off with baby gates. Or you may want to crate train your puppy and use the crate to confine him. (Be sure to learn how to use a crate

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humanely as a method of confinement.) If your puppy has spent several hours in confinement, you'll need to take him directly to his bathroom spot as soon as you let him out, and praise him when he eliminates.

Oops!

Expect your puppy to have a few accidents in the house—it's a normal part of housetraining. Here's what to do when that happens:

- ❖ When you catch him in the act of eliminating in the house, do something to interrupt him, like make a startling noise (be careful not to scare him). Immediately take him to his bathroom spot, praise him, and give him a treat if he finishes eliminating there.
- ❖ Don't punish your puppy for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Just clean it up. Rubbing your puppy's nose in it, taking him to the spot and scolding him, or any other punishment will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. In fact, punishment will often do more harm than good.
- ❖ Cleaning the soiled area is very important because puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces.

It's extremely important that you use the supervision and confinement procedures outlined above to prevent the number of accidents. If you allow your puppy to eliminate frequently in the house, he'll get confused about where he's supposed to eliminate, which will prolong the housetraining process.

Paper Training

A puppy under six months of age cannot be expected to control his bladder for more than a few hours at a time. If you have to be away from home more than four or five hours a day, this may not be the best time for you to get a puppy; instead, you may want to consider an older dog, who can wait for your return.

But if you're already committed to having a puppy and must be away for long periods of time, you'll need to make arrangements for someone, such as a responsible neighbor or a professional pet sitter, to take him outside to eliminate.

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- Crate Training Your Dog

Or you'll need to train him to eliminate in a specific place indoors. Be aware, however, that doing so can prolong the process of housetraining. Teaching your puppy to eliminate on newspaper may create a lifelong surface preference, meaning that even as an adult he may eliminate on any newspaper lying around the living room.

When your puppy must be left alone for long periods of time, confine him to an area with enough room for a sleeping space, a playing space, and a separate place to eliminate. In the area designated as the elimination area, use either newspapers or a sod box. To make a sod box, place sod in a container such as a child's small plastic swimming pool. You can also find dog litter products at a pet supply store. If you clean up an accident in the house, put the soiled rags or paper towels in the designated elimination area. The smell will help your puppy recognize the area as the place where he is supposed to eliminate.

Other Types of House Soiling Problems

If you've consistently followed the housetraining procedures and your puppy continues to eliminate in the house, there may be another reason for his behavior.

- ❖ **Medical Problems:** House soiling can often be caused by physical problems such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.
- ❖ **Submissive/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings or periods of intense play or when they're about to be punished.
- ❖ **Territorial Urine-Marking:** Dogs sometimes deposit small amounts of urine or feces to scent-mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when they believe their territory has been invaded.
- ❖ **Separation Anxiety:** Dogs who become anxious when they're left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms as well, such as destructive behavior or vocalization.
- ❖ **Fears or Phobias:** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder or bowels. If your puppy is afraid of loud noises such as thunderstorms or fireworks, he may house soil when he's exposed to these sounds.

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BEHAVIOR
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Dog Toys and How to Use Them

FOR DOGS AND OTHER ANIMAL COMPANIONS, toys are not a luxury, but a necessity. Toys help fight boredom in dogs left alone, and toys can even help prevent some problem behaviors from developing.

Although cats can be pretty picky when it comes to enjoying particular toys—ignoring a \$10 catnip mouse and marveling over a piece of crumpled newsprint—dogs are often more than willing to play with any object they can get their paws on. That means you'll need to be particularly careful when monitoring your dog's playtime to prevent any "unscheduled" activities.

"Safe" Toys

Many factors contribute to the safety or danger of a toy, and a number of them depend upon your dog's size, activity level, and preferences. Another factor is the environment in which your dog spends his time. Although we can't guarantee your dog's enthusiasm or his safety with any specific toy, we can offer the following guidelines.

Be Cautious

The things that are usually most attractive to dogs are often the very things that are the most dangerous. Dog-proof your home by safely storing string, ribbon, rubber bands, children's toys, panty hose, and anything else that could be ingested.

Toys should be appropriate for your dog's size. Balls and other toys that are too small can easily be swallowed or become lodged in your dog's throat.

Avoid or alter any toys that aren't "dog proof" by removing ribbons, strings, eyes, or other parts that

could be chewed or ingested. Discard toys that start to break into pieces or have pieces torn off. You should also avoid "tug-of-war" games with dogs who have dominant personalities. (Such games between dogs are usually fine.)

Ask your veterinarian which rawhide toys are safe and which aren't. Unless your veterinarian says otherwise, "chewies" like hooves, pig's ears, and rawhides should only be played with under your supervision. Very hard rubber toys are safer and last longer.

Take note of any toy that contains a "squeaker" buried in its center. Your dog may feel that he must find and destroy the source of the squeaking, and he could ingest it—in which case squeaking objects should also be used under your supervision.

Check labels for child safety. Look for stuffed toys that are labeled as safe for children under three years of age and that don't contain any dangerous fillings. Problem fillings include things like nutshells and polystyrene beads, but even "safe" stuffings aren't truly digestible. Remember that soft toys are not indestructible, but some are sturdier than others. Soft toys should be machine washable.

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Recommended Toys

Active Toys

Very hard rubber toys, such as Nylabone®-type products and Kong®-type products, are available in a variety of shapes and sizes and are fun for chewing and for carrying around.

“Rope” toys are usually available in a “bone” shape with knotted ends.

Tennis balls make great dog toys, but keep an eye out for any that could be chewed through, and discard them.

Distraction Toys

Kong-type toys, especially when filled with broken-up treats—or, even better, a mixture of broken-up treats and peanut butter—can keep a puppy or dog busy for hours. Only by chewing diligently can your dog get to the treats, and then only in small bits. Double-check with your veterinarian about whether or not you should give peanut butter to your dog. Be sure to choose a Kong-type toy of appropriate size for your dog.

“Busy-box” toys are large rubber cubes with hiding places for treats. Only by moving the cube around with his nose, mouth, and paws can your dog get to the goodies.

Comfort Toys

Soft stuffed toys are good for several purposes but aren't appropriate for all dogs. For some dogs, the stuffed toy should be small enough to carry around. For dogs who want to shake or “kill” the toy, the toy should be the size that “prey” would be for that size dog (mouse-size, rabbit-size, or duck-size).

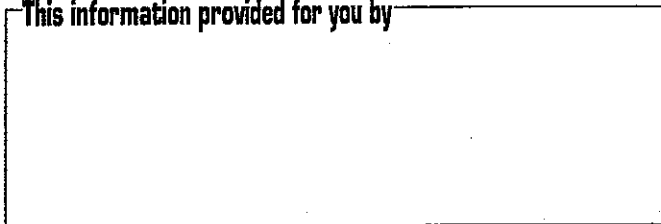
Dirty laundry, such as an old t-shirt, pillowcase, towel, or blanket, can be very comforting to a dog, especially if the item smells like you! Be forewarned that the item could be destroyed by industrious fluffing, carrying, and nosing.

Get the Most out of Toys!

- Rotate your dog's toys weekly by making only a few toys available at a time. Keep a variety of types easily accessible. If your dog has a favorite, like a soft “baby,” you may want to leave it out all the time.
- Provide toys that offer variety—at least one toy to carry, one to “kill,” one to roll, and one to “baby.”
- Hide-and-seek is a fun game for dogs. “Found” toys are often much more attractive than a toy which is obviously introduced. Making an interactive game out of finding toys or treats is a good “rainy-day” activity for your dog, using up energy without the need for a lot of space.
- Many of your dog's toys should be interactive. Interactive play is very important for your dog because he needs active “people time”—and such play also enhances the bond between you and your pet. By focusing on a specific task—such as repeatedly returning a ball, Kong, or Frisbee®, or playing hide-and-seek with treats or toys—your dog can expel pent-up mental and physical energy in a limited amount of time and space. This greatly reduces stress due to confinement, isolation, and boredom. For young, high-energy, and untrained dogs, interactive play also offers an opportunity for socialization and helps them learn about appropriate and inappropriate behavior, such as jumping up or being mouthy.

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BEHAVIOR
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Nothing in Life Is Free

A Training Technique for Dogs

DOES YOUR DOG GET ON THE FURNITURE and refuse to get off? Nudge your hand and insist on being petted or played with? Refuse to come when called? Defend his food bowl or toys from you?

If so, a training technique called “nothing in life is free” may be just the solution you’re looking for. “Nothing in life is free” is not a magic pill that will solve a specific behavior problem. Instead, it’s a way of living with your dog that will help him behave better because he trusts and accepts you as his leader and is confident knowing his place in the family.

How to Practice “Nothing in Life Is Free”

- Use positive reinforcement methods to teach your dog a few commands and tricks. “Sit,” “Down,” and “Stay” are useful commands. “Shake,” “Speak,” and “Roll over” are fun tricks to teach your dog.
- Once your dog has mastered a few commands, you can begin to practice “nothing in life is free.” Before you give your dog anything (food, a treat, a walk, a pat on the head), he must first perform one of the commands he has learned. See the chart below for examples.

- Once you’ve given the command, don’t give your dog what he wants until he does what you want. If he refuses to perform the command, walk away, come back a few minutes later, and start again. If your dog refuses to obey the command, be patient and remember that eventually he will have to obey your command to get what he wants.

Make sure your dog knows the command well and understands what you want before you begin practicing “nothing in life is free.”

The Benefits of This Technique

- Most dogs assume a neutral or submissive role toward people, but some dogs will challenge their owners for dominance. Requiring a dominant dog to work for everything he wants is a safe, nonconfrontational way to establish control.

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YOU	YOUR DOG
Put your dog’s leash on to go for a walk	Must sit until you’ve put the leash on
Feed your dog	Must lie down and stay until you’ve put the bowl down
Play a game of fetch after work	Must sit and “shake hands” each time you throw the toy
Rub your dog’s belly while watching TV	Must lie down and roll over before being petted

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- ✱ Dogs who may never display aggressive behavior such as growling, snarling, or snapping may still manage to manipulate you. These dogs may display affectionate behavior that borders on being "pushy," such as nudging your hand to be petted or "worming" their way onto the furniture to be close to you. This technique gently reminds the dog that he must abide by your rules.
- ✱ Fearful dogs may become more confident by obeying commands. Having a strong leader and knowing his place in the hierarchy helps to make the submissive dog feel more secure.

Why This Technique Works

Animals who live in groups, like dogs, establish a social structure within the group called a dominance hierarchy. This dominance hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict, and promote cooperation among pack members. To ensure that your home is a safe and happy place for pets and people, the humans in the household should assume the highest positions in the dominance hierarchy. Practicing "nothing in life is free" gently and effectively communicates to your dog that his position in the hierarchy is subordinate to yours.

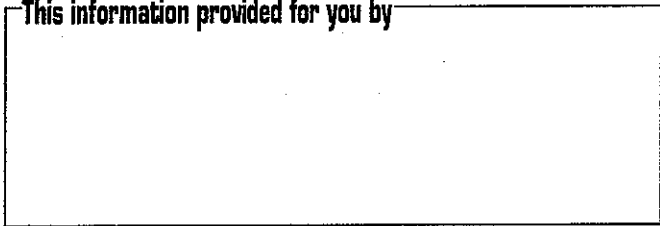
From your dog's point of view, children also have a place in this hierarchy. Because children are small and can get down on the dog's level to play, dogs often consider them to be playmates rather than superiors. With the supervision of an adult, it's a good idea to encourage children in the household to also practice "nothing in life is free" with the family dog.

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- **Positive Reinforcement: Training Your Dog (or Cat!) with Treats and Praise**

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