

# Separation anxiety

Separation anxiety is a dog problem behavior that occurs when dog is away from their owner. It manifests itself in several ways.

## Symptoms



become destructive



poo indoors



excessive salivation



pant and pace



barking and whining

## Common causes / Why does it occur?



### over-attached

Separation-related distress can affect any breed and at any age, but typically it occurs in dogs that are over-attached to the owner, often following them around the house – even to the bathroom.



### rescue dogs

Rescue dogs can be susceptible as the owners spend all their time giving the dog lots of attention and helping to settle in and then, suddenly, the situation and routines are totally changed when the owners return to work and the dog can't cope.



### one person interaction

Even dogs that have been owned from a puppy can develop separation problems, particularly if they are owned by and spend all their time with one person.

## Treating dog anxiety

### avoid reacting badly

If your pet misbehaves while you're out, avoid reacting badly or punishing them: it will only make them more anxious.

### toys and playing

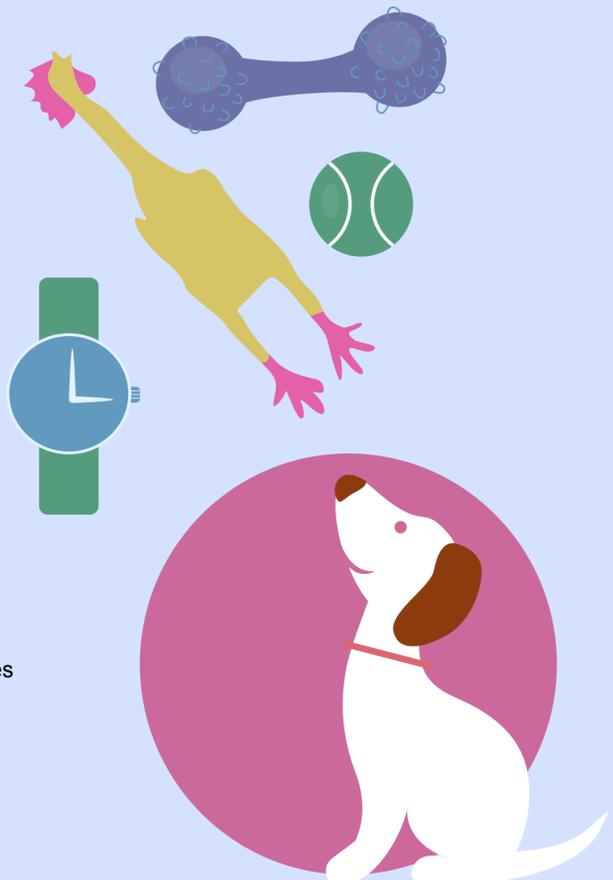
Many pets get bored and may destroy possessions just for something to do. Divert them with chew-toys or food puzzles.

### create a routine

A dog is more inclined to relax if he has been exercised, gone to the toilet and fed a small meal before you go out.

### train your dog

Take a few short, planned absences so that your dog becomes familiar with them. Dog gates are useful, as they enable the dog to be physically separated from, but still see, the owner. Over time, the room door can be gradually closed so that the dog gets used to being separated from its owner behind a solid door.



## If it gets very serious

Some dogs can become so distressed that they may cause damage to themselves, or to doors and window frames, as they try to follow their owner out of the house. In this case, veterinary advice should be sought for a referral to a qualified behaviourist. In some instances, drug treatments may be necessary.