

COMMON MISTAKES IT'S EASY TO MAKE WITH YOUR DOG'S SEPARATION ANXIETY

LEAVING YOUR DOG TO "CRY IT OUT"

This is a panic disorder. Your dog is terrified of being alone, and they will not just get used to it. All this will do will reinforce to your dog that being alone is terrifying, and can make the anxiety worse. Being exposed to constant stress can increase the likelihood of further medical issues and additional anxiety issues.



CRATING YOUR DOG

Most dogs with separation anxiety also struggle with confinement. Being behind a barrier can create additional anxiety and frustration, making it harder to get a foothold on the behaviour and make progress. Crates also do not address your dog's emotions which is what is driving the anxiety, and anxious dogs can cause themselves a huge amount of damage trying to escape from confinement.

USING FOOD TOYS

Using food won't address the issue. It can either delay the panic until the food has finished, your dog may not eat if they are anxious, plus giving a food toy can become a predictor that you are about to leave, causing your dog to become anxious before you have even left.



NOT WATCHING YOUR DOG LIVE

If you are waiting outside the door until you hear your dog bark or whine, then coming in, it is too late. You are missing the more subtle signs of anxiety that will usually come before vocalising. It is imperative that you watch your dog live on a camera.

INCREASING DURATION OF ABSENCES BEFORE DOG IS READY

If your dog is being pushed over threshold regularly by the duration of absences being increased too fast, progress will never be made. We need to be using gradual desensitisation and only increasing duration as much as your dog can easily cope with.

NOT ASSESSING YOUR DOGS LIFE FOR OTHER STRESSORS

If other external variables are causing your dog extra anxiety, or if pain is present, progress will be very limited. We need to be looking at all areas of your dogs life as behaviour rarely happens in isolation.

USING MEDICATION WITHOUT BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION

Most vets will not prescribe medication unless you are working through a behaviour modification programme, as medication is a supportive structure which optimises conditions for your dog to be able to learn to feel safe home alone. Given alone, medication will most likely elicit barely any improvement.



SO WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

SYSTEMATIC DESENSITISATION

this is a process we use designed to gradually build up the length of time your dog is left at a speed that always keeps them comfortable. We ensure your dog never feels anxious at all during absences.

In order for this to be successful we need to SUSPEND ABSENCES. This means your dog must not be left alone longer than they can cope with. At the start of the process this usually means your dog cannot be left alone at all apart than the controlled, daily absences.

WHY IS SUSPENDING ABSENCES SO IMPORTANT?

Because if a dog is still being left alone long enough to feel anxious, it is going to be impossible for them to ever start to feel safe during alone time. This, however, is temporary and for long term gain!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS HOW WE CAN HELP
YOU TEACH YOUR DOG TO FEEL SAFE HOME ALONE
[CLICK HERE](#) TO BOOK IN A **FREE** CALL