

## DOG BEHAVIOR

### 5 Tips to Help Dog Separation Anxiety

By Cesar Millan

You come home from a long day at work to a spinning, jumping whirlwind of energy. Your dog follows you into your living room, where you find that he has chewed on your favorite pair of shoes. Your neighbor comes by to tell you that, once again, your dog has been driving the neighborhood crazy by howling and barking while you were away. Is this scenario familiar? Your dog may be suffering from dog separation anxiety.

In nature, dogs are almost never away from their pack. It is our job to help make this unnatural situation less stressful!

Here are five tips to help ease separation anxiety:

1. Before you leave the house, take your dog for a walk.

Start your day by taking your dog for a brisk walk. To make the walk even more rigorous, use a dog backpack with extra weight in it. Then reward your dog's calm-submissive energy with food and water. Some dogs may need to rest before eating, but all dogs can benefit from hydration. The idea is to leave your dog in quiet, resting mode while you are away.

2. No touch, no talk, no eye contact.

Don't make a big deal when you leave for the day or when you return. This way, you are communicating to your dog that the time apart is no big deal. It's just business as usual! Depending on the severity of the dog anxiety, you may need to practice the rule for five minutes or up to an hour before you leave and when you get back.

3. Say goodbye to your dog long before you leave.

Having trouble practicing "no touch, no talk, no eye contact"? Take a moment to share affection and tell your dog that you will miss him way before you actually leave. Keep in mind that this display is for you, not your dog! Your dog won't have his feelings hurt if you didn't say goodbye.

4. Stay calm and assertive!

When you are ready to go to work, leave those guilty, nervous, and concerned feelings behind. Instead, let your dog know that everything is going to be okay by projecting the confident energy of a pack leader. A calm and assertive leader can ease separation anxiety in dogs.

5. Start out small by leaving your dog alone for just five minutes.

Leave your dog alone for five minutes, then extend the time to twenty minutes, then an hour. Continue to increase the time you spend away until you can leave for a full eight hours without any more dog problems!