



Separation anxiety is a problem that all dog owners have experienced, but not all of them are aware what it is. A dog's anxious behavior is very unpleasant at some point as it makes your dog uneasy when you leave. Tolerating this behavior and allowing it to develop will turn your dog into a menace in your home as it might resort to making a mess out of your household items or furniture, or it can become so noisy with its persistent barking that lasts for hours, especially when it is left alone.

### **The Sources of Dog Separation Anxiety**

By instinct, dogs are social animals. They belong to a pack and they have a strong attachment to their master. When a dog is left behind by its master, it has a tendency to get overly excited. It is important to note that most of the anxiety that dogs feel is caused by their attachment to specific actions that you take relative to your absence. Dogs don't like to be left alone, there's no question about it, but there's no direct connection why they should be so disturbed when you leave.

Separation anxiety occurs when you lavish your attention to your dog before you leave or when you arrive. You could also be doing a pattern of the same activities before you depart. Dogs can easily tag a sequence of activities overtime, and they will know that you are leaving. As the dog's behavior is reinforced on a daily basis, time will come that it cannot contain its anxiety anymore, and anxiety is manifested.

### **Reducing Dog Separation Anxiety**

You can actually reduce your dog's separation anxiety in a lot of ways.

**Change Your Routine.** Make changes to your routines, especially your pre-departure habits. Dogs are very attentive creatures. They can tag a pattern of a series of activities that are repeated overtime. Make sure to change your daily pre-departure activities so that the dog can not retain a particular pattern of your activities. This will help to slowly reduce your dog's anxiety.

**Don't Reinforce it.** Ignoring your dog for at least 10 minutes before you leave or upon your arrival will help to make the dog forget the connection of your departure to the attention that it gets. Petting a dog before leaving it on only reinforces its anxious behavior. Another way of preventing your dog from developing separation anxiety is to put it through crate training, or placing them in a separate room in the house, or leaving the house and coming back at varying intervals.



**Building Up to Longer Times.** Alter your dog's anticipations of your return. If the dog detects that you are about to leave, spend more time to stay before finally leaving, but do not pay attention to your dog on that period, because it will only add to its anxiety. You can also shorten the intervals that you will be away. Your dog's anxiety will subside upon seeing you return within a short period. You can always extend the period that you will be away without your dog noticing it any longer.

## You're Not Being Mean

Contrary to popular belief, applying ways that eliminate separation anxiety are not spiteful or mean; those are ways that actually help your dog to relax and be assured that you are coming back each time you leave. It is also a demonstration of that you are in control. Remember that the lesser the anxiety, the healthier your dog will be.

Before it will worsen to become a nuisance, your dog's anxiety problems need to be reduced if not eliminated. Avoid petting them before leaving or upon your arrival. Do not allow your dog to establish a connection of your pre-departure activities to the attention you give, in order to keep it free from separation anxiety.

Stan Beck has helped many pet owners with his [Dog Training Methods](#). Visit his website to give you valuable insights about dog behavior training and how to reduce your dog's [Separation Anxiety](#).

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