

Separation Anxiety



What is Separation Anxiety?

Separation anxiety is a panic issue, a fear of being home alone. Dogs in the clutches of this condition are experiencing a genuine phobia about alone time as it is terrifying for them. Have you ever known or met someone afraid of flying, spiders, or perhaps public speaking? If so, then you recognize how real that fear feels to them and how debilitating it can be. Dogs struggling with separation anxiety are having a hard time, not giving you a hard time.

What are some indicators of Separation Anxiety?

- Periods of crying, barking howling when alone
- Uncontrolled urination or defecating
- Destructive behaviours e.g. chewing furniture, windows, doors
- Self-inflicting injuries when attempting to escape
- Pacing, panting, drooling

What causes Separation Anxiety?

We know a lot about what does not cause it; yet, we know very little about what does. There are studies to suggest that genetics likely play a role in separation anxiety, so don't believe the myth that only dogs from shelters and rescues are afflicted. Recent research has also dispelled a few other causation myths. Separation anxiety is not caused by showing your dog affection, letting them sleep in your bed, celebrating their birthday, taking them with you everywhere, or a lack of structure.

What should I do next?

- Speak to your veterinarian about what you are noticing, referral to a veterinary behaviourist may be required. 'KalmPets' or 'Animal Sense' is the go-to in WA.
- Lastly avoid leaving your dog alone whilst we plan!



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• DO's •

- DO - Suspend all unsupervised absence outside of the specified training
- DO - Take things gradually so the dog can learn alone time is safe
- DO - Ensure the dog gets adequate exercise and enrichment each day
- DO - Help the dog to become comfortable alone without distractions
- DO - Spend time determining where the dog is most comfortable in the home



• DON'Ts •

- DON'T - Wait it out until the dog is vocalising - remember they are experiencing panic!
- DON'T - Resort to any punishment techniques that will likely exacerbate the problem
- DON'T - Expect that excessively exercising your dog will resolve separation anxiety
- DON'T - Assume that a dog has to be confined in order to lessen the destruction or to be safe - Remember the dog needs to feel safe