
Simulated vs. True Dog Separation Anxiety

There is true separation anxiety, and there is simulated separation anxiety, in which the dog behaviour appears to be separation anxiety but it is, intact, a learned behaviour.

Simulated separation anxiety is often manifested when the dog lacks leadership as well as self-control. True separation anxiety, on the other hand, causes the dog to experience real stress during the absence of his owner.

In simulated separation anxiety, the dog knows that he will get attention if he acts badly. For some dogs, even being verbally reprimanded for such behaviour is rewarding because he feels he was noticed.

Negative attention can be a reward in many cases, if the owner is unaware that certain needs of his dog are not being met. In these cases, there is little real stress involved, just behaviour.

Simulated separation is fairly easy to overcome with a gradual approach, slowly increasing the amount of time spent in a crate - when you are at home as well as away - consistent obedience training, proper amounts of exercise, and strong leadership.

Severe cases of true separation anxiety impose a challenge to Pack Leaders.

PAWS DARWIN: MORE THAN JUST REHOMING

DESEX, REGISTER, MICROCHIP AND TRAIN

One of the most common phrases used by owners to describe a dog that appears stressed when the owner leaves the home - or just leaves the room - is separation anxiety in dogs.

We can define separation anxiety as a dog problem behaviour that shows itself through symptoms like excessive salivation, barking, whining, destroying items in the home, scratching at walls, doors and floors and attempting to escape from the crate, or room.

The Importance of Obedience Training and discipline

I believe much of the cure for separation anxiety comes from obedience training and discipline. This approach lets your dog know what is expected of him, helping his good behaviour to become a habit. He feels wrong showing an unwanted behaviour even without you indicating it. Take advantage of that.

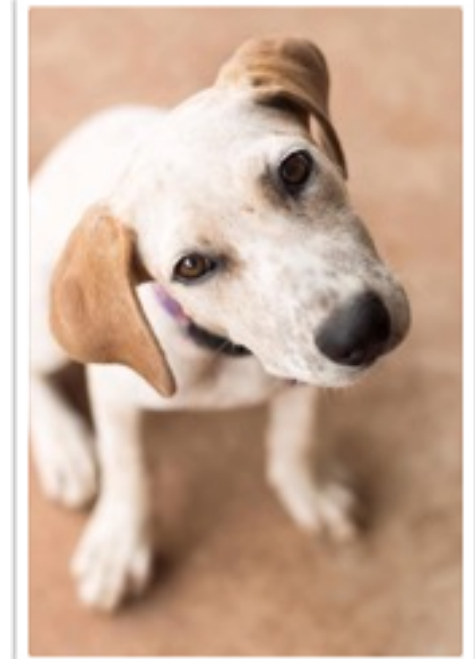
Spend time training - not just classes once a week - often and consistently. Show your dog what you want from him in and around the house, and during daily routines. Two minutes here, five minutes there. Not just going for a walk but training him as you go to sit at curbsides, and sit when meeting others, people and dogs.

Teach your dog to sit at the door, lie down and stay while you go out of sight for increasing periods of time in your own house. Train your dog to sit and wait to be greeted by guests, move aside when you go to the refrigerator, and go to the bathroom on cue. In general you should be teaching your dog in small steps to be respectful and have confidence in himself.



PAWS DARWIN

SEPARATION ANXIETY



Classes are \$15 per dog, per class.
Unless you have a voucher.

Classes held at the following times and locations:

- Saturdays at 10:30am at the the Paws Darwin Shelter: 2/3 Moo Street Berrimah.
- Monday nights at 6pm at Salvation Army Church Hall: Cnr of Temple Terrace and Woodroffe Avenue.
(08) 8941 1272
pawsdarwin@gmail.com

Causes of Dog Separation Anxiety

Dog separation anxiety is often unknowingly encouraged by dog owners. We make a big fuss when we leave or come home, and in doing so we reward the dog's concern with our absence, provoking in him even more stress every time we leave.

We like our dogs to be with us when they are puppies, we take them everywhere for socialisation. Then, we have to leave them alone, but they reach an age when they not only want, but also feel the need to be with us - we are their source of confidence, their security, and their pack.

A change in their routines can create the symptoms of dog anxiety, but destruction and stress can also be created by boredom and lack of exercises. Terriers are born to dig, Retrievers to carry and protection breeds to protect. So, in some instances we are holding them back from their instincts and drives, rather than nurturing them.

A good start to correcting these problems are: exercise, discipline, and only then, affection. You need to establish a balance between patience, obedience, and confidence in your dog.

Aim to develop behaviour in your dog that reflects the harmonious partnership you both share. He should have enough confidence in himself and in your leadership. This way he can be confident in situations, such as being left alone, because he knows that you will always provide the leadership and guidance required. He trusts and knows that you will come home.

How can you Prevent Dog Separation anxiety?

Vets may prescribe drugs, which tend to calm a dog's senses a little, but they are not a cure. Drugs only provide a support mechanism to assist the owner in rehabilitating the dog, it is only a temporary fix for the underlying problem. You have to treat the root of the cause.

It really starts the moment you get your puppy. All too often a puppy taken from its litter begins to cry when left alone. This is a big change for the pup, they no longer have the pack they were born with. When he cries, we go and pick him up and show sympathy - his crying is rewarded/ Later if he is crying in the crate, and you let him out he is being rewarded for his crying. Only reward desired behaviour.

From the beginning, we need to teach our pup to be quiet and settle down for increasing periods of time. We need to teach patience and calmness and reward that instead. When he is out with us, we should not be attempting to constantly interact with him. Let him learn to entertain himself with toys.

Teach the pup to accept the crate. Allow him to explore under supervision and to learn the limits and boundaries of this environment; to gain respect for this environment, and for the people in it. That means consistency in all the things you do, and that includes everyone in the family who interacts with your dog.



Crate Training to Avoid Dog Separation Anxiety

When you are home, have your dog familiar with being in the crate. Start with short periods and increase the time he spends in it. Feed him in the crate, let him have his favourite bone to be used as a stress reliever while he is in there.

Some toys are developed to entertain, or occupy your dog when you leave. I prefer to use such interactive toys only when I am present. These work because your dog's mind is stimulated while attempting to remove treats from a toy, which then relaxes his mind, and then he sleeps.

For further information please read the information

Change your routine

It is possible for your dog to recognise a series of actions, you have to be clever. Changing your dog's habits often means changing your own and that can be difficult - we are creatures of habit - but you'll have to change your routine.

Use a different door, put your coat and bag in different places. Make changes to create a different picture. If you are watching TV, or working on the computer, and your dog gets up every time you get up, simply get up and sit down again.

Your dog does not have to follow you everywhere. Yes he can watch but he should be able to wait until you request his company.