

Separation Anxiety

Dogs with separation anxiety exhibit behavior problems when they're left alone. Typically, they'll have a dramatic anxiety response within a short time (20-45 minutes) after their owners leave them. The most common of these behaviors are:

- ❖ Digging, chewing and scratching at doors or windows in an attempt to escape and reunite with their owners.
- ❖ Howling, barking and crying in an attempt to get their owner to return.
- ❖ Urination and defecation (even with housetrained dogs) as a result of distress.

Why Do Dogs Suffer From Separation Anxiety?

We don't fully understand exactly why some dogs suffer from separation anxiety and, under similar circumstances, others don't. It's important to realize, however, that the destruction and house soiling that often occur with separation anxiety are not the dog's attempt to punish or seek revenge on his owner for leaving him alone, but are actually part of a panic response.

Separation anxiety sometimes occurs when:

- ❖ A dog has never or rarely been left alone.
- ❖ Following a long interval, such as a vacation, during which the owner and* dog are constantly together.
- ❖ After a traumatic event (from the dog's point of view) such as a period of time spent at a shelter or boarding kennel.
- ❖ After a change in the family's routine or structure (a child leaving for college, a change in work schedule, a move to a new home, a new pet or person in the home).

How Do I Know If My Dog Has Separation Anxiety?

Because there are many reasons for the behaviors associated with separation anxiety, it's essential to correctly diagnose the reason for the behavior before proceeding with treatment. If most, or all, of the following statements are true about your dog, he may have a separation anxiety problem:

- ❖ The behavior occurs exclusively or primarily when he's left alone.
- ❖ He follows you from room to room whenever you're home.
- ❖ He displays effusive, frantic greeting behaviors.
- ❖ The behavior **always** occurs when he's left alone, whether for a short or long period of time.
- ❖ He reacts with excitement, depression or anxiety to your preparations to leave the house.
- ❖ He dislikes spending time outdoors by himself.

What To Do If Your Dog Has Separation Anxiety

For a minor separation anxiety problem, the following techniques may be helpful by themselves. For more severe problems, these techniques should be used along with the desensitization process described in the next section.

- ❖ Keep arrivals and departures low-key. For example, when you arrive home, ignore your dog for the first few minutes, then calmly pet him.
- ❖ Leave your dog with an article of clothing that smells like you, an old tee shirt that you've slept in recently, for example.
- ❖ Establish a "safety cue"—a word or action that you use **every** time you leave that tells your dog you'll be back. Dogs usually learn to associate certain cues with short absences by their owners. For example, when you take out the garbage, your dog knows you come right back and doesn't become anxious. Therefore, it's helpful to associate a safety cue with your practice departures and short-duration absences.

Some examples of safety cues are: a playing radio; a playing television; a bone; or a toy (one that doesn't have dangerous fillings and can't be torn into pieces). Use your safety cue during practice sessions, but don't present your dog with the safety cue when you leave for a period of time longer than he can tolerate or the value of the safety cue will be lost. Leaving a radio on to provide company for your dog isn't particularly useful by itself, but a playing radio may work if you've used it consistently as a safety cue in your practice sessions. If your dog engages in destructive chewing as part of his separation distress, offering him a chewing item as a safety cue is a good idea. Very hard rubber toys that can be stuffed with treats and Nylabone-like products are good choices.

Desensitization Techniques For More Severe Cases Of Separation Anxiety

The primary treatment for more severe cases of separation anxiety is a systematic process of getting your dog used to being alone. You must teach your dog to remain calm during "practice" departures and short absences. We recommend the following procedure:

- ❖ Begin by engaging in your normal departure activities (getting your keys, putting on your coat), then sit back down. Repeat this step until your dog shows no distress in response to your activities.
- ❖ Next, engage in your normal departure activities **and** go to the door and open it, then sit back down.

- ❖ Next, step outside the door, leaving the door open, then return.
- ❖ Finally, step outside, close the door, then immediately return. Slowly get your dog accustomed to being alone with the door closed between you for several seconds.
- ❖ Proceed very gradually from step to step, repeating each step until your dog shows no signs of distress (the number of repetitions will vary depending on the severity of the problem). If at any time in this process your actions produce an anxiety response in your dog, you've proceeded too fast. Return to an earlier step in the process and practice this step until the dog shows no distress response, then proceed to the next step.
- ❖ When your dog is tolerating your being on the other side of the door for several seconds, begin short-duration absences. This step involves giving the dog a verbal cue (for example, "I'll be back."), leaving and then returning within a minute. Your return must be low-key: either ignore your dog or greet him quietly and calmly. If he shows no signs of distress, repeat the exercise. If he appears anxious, wait until he relaxes to repeat the exercise. Gradually increase the length of time you're gone.
- ❖ Practice as many absences as possible that last less than ten minutes. You can do many departures within one session if your dog relaxes sufficiently between departures. You should also scatter practice departures and short-duration absences throughout the day.
- ❖ Once your dog can handle short absences (30 to 90 minutes), he'll usually be able to handle longer intervals alone and you won't have to work up to all-day absences minute by minute. The hard part is at the beginning, but the job gets easier as you go along. Nevertheless, you must go slowly at first. How long it takes to condition your dog to being alone depends on the severity of his problem.

Teaching The Sit-Stay And Down-Stay

Practice sit-stay or down-stay exercises using positive reinforcement. Never punish your dog during these training sessions. Gradually increase the distance you move away from your dog. Your goal is to be able to move briefly out of your dog's sight while he remains in the "stay" position. The point is to teach him that he can remain calmly and happily in one place while you go to another. As you progress, you can do this during the course of your normal daily activities. For example, if you're watching television with your dog by your side and you get up for a snack, tell him to stay, and leave the room. When you come back, give him a treat or quietly praise him.

Interim Solutions

Because the above-described treatments can take a while, and because a dog with separation anxiety can do serious damage to himself and/or your home in the interim, some of the following suggestions may be helpful in dealing with the problems in the short term:

- ❖ Consult your veterinarian about the possibility of drug therapy. A good anti-anxiety drug should not sedate your dog, but simply reduce his anxiety while you're gone. Such medication is a temporary measure and should be used in conjunction with behavior modification techniques.
- ❖ Take your dog to a dog day care facility or boarding kennel.
- ❖ Leave your dog with a friend, family member or neighbor.
- ❖ Take your dog to work with you, even for half a day, if possible.

What Won't Help A Separation Anxiety Problem

- ❖ Punishment is not an effective way to treat separation anxiety. In fact, if you punish your dog after you return home it may actually increase his separation anxiety.
- ❖ Getting another pet. This usually doesn't help an anxious dog as his anxiety is the result of his separation from you, his person, not merely the result of being alone.
- ❖ Crating your dog. Your dog will still engage in anxiety responses in the crate. He may urinate, defecate, howl or even injure himself in an attempt to escape from the crate.
- ❖ Leave the radio on (unless the radio is used as a "safety cue" - see above).
- ❖ Obedience school. While obedience training is always a good idea, it won't directly help a separation anxiety problem. Separation anxiety is not the result of disobedience or lack of training, it's a panic response.

“Bark! Bark! Bark!”

Some canine behavior problems, such as housesoiling, affect only a dog's owners. However, problems such as escaping and excessive barking can result in neighborhood disputes and violations of animal control ordinances. Therefore, barking dogs can become “people problems.” If your dog's barking has created neighborhood tension, it's a good idea to discuss the problem with your neighbors. It is perfectly normal and reasonable for dogs to bark from time to time, just as children make noise when they play outside. However, continual barking for long periods of time is a sign that your dog has a problem that needs to be addressed.

The first thing you need to do is determine when and for how long your dog barks, and what is causing him to bark. You may need to do some detective work to obtain this information, especially if the barking occurs when you're not home. Ask your neighbors, drive or walk around the block and watch and listen for a while, or start a tape recorder or video camera when you leave for work. Hopefully, you will be able to discover which of the common problems discussed below is the cause of your dog's barking.

Social Isolation/Frustration/Attention Seeking

Your dog may be barking because he's bored and lonely if:

- He's left alone for long periods of time without opportunities for interaction with you.
- His environment is relatively barren, without playmates or toys.
- He's a puppy or adolescent (under 3 years old) and does not have other outlets for his energy.
- He's a particularly active type of dog (like the herding or sporting breeds) who needs a “job” to be happy.

Recommendations:

Expand your dog's world and increase his “people time” in the following ways:

- Walk your dog daily – it's good exercise for both of you.
- Teach your dog to fetch a ball or Frisbee and practice with him as often as possible.
- Teach your dog a few commands and/or tricks and practice them every day for five to 10 minutes.
- Take an obedience class with your dog.
- Provide interesting toys to keep your dog busy when you're not home (Kong®-type toys filled with treats or busy-box toys). Rotating the toys makes them seem new and interesting (see our handout, “Dog Toys and How to Use Them”).
- If your dog is barking to get your attention, make sure he has sufficient time with you on a daily basis (petting, grooming, playing, exercising), so he doesn't have to resort to misbehaving to get your attention.
- Keep your dog inside when you're unable to supervise him.
- Take your dog to work with you every now and then, if possible.
- If you work very long hours, take him to a doggie day care or have a friend or neighbor walk and/or play with him.
- Never give your dog attention while he is barking. Ignore him until he stops for at least three seconds, then reward with attention or treats.

Territorial/Protective Behavior

Your dog may be barking to guard his territory if:

- The barking occurs in the presence of “intruders,” which may include the mail carrier, children walking to school and other dogs or neighbors in adjacent yards.
- Your dog's posture while he's barking appears threatening – tail held high and ears up and forward.
- You've encouraged your dog to be responsive to people and noises outside.

Recommendations:

- Teach your dog a “quiet” command. When he begins to bark at a passer-by, allow two or three barks, then say “quiet” and interrupt his barking by shaking a can filled with pennies or squirting water at his mouth with a spray bottle or squirt gun. This will cause him to stop barking momentarily. While he's quiet, say “good quiet” and pop a tasty treat into his mouth. Remember, the loud noise or squirt isn't meant to punish him; rather it is to startle him into being quiet so you can quickly reward him. If your dog is frightened by the noise or squirt bottle, find an alternative method of interrupting his barking (throw a toy or ball toward him).
- Desensitize your dog to the stimulus that triggers the barking. Teach him that the people he views as intruders are actually friends and that good things happen to him when these people are around. Ask someone to walk by your yard, starting far enough away so that your dog is not barking, then reward him for quiet behavior as he obeys a “sit” or “down” command. Use a very special food reward such as little pieces of cheese or meat. As the person

gradually comes closer, continue to reward his quiet behavior. It may take several sessions before the person can come close without your dog barking. When the person can come very close without your dog barking, have them feed him a treat or throw a toy for him. In order for this technique to work, you'll have to make sure your dog doesn't see people outside between sessions.

- If your dog barks while inside the house when you're home, call him to you, have him obey a command, such as "sit" or "down," and reward him with praise and a treat.
- Don't inadvertently encourage this type of barking by enticing your dog to bark at things he hears or sees outside.
- Have your dog neutered (or spayed if your dog is a female) to decrease territorial behavior.
- Limit the dog's access to views that might be causing him to bark when you are not home.

Fears And Phobias

Your dog's barking may be a response to something he is afraid of if:

- The barking occurs when he's exposed to loud noises, such as thunderstorms, firecrackers or construction equipment.
- Your dog's posture indicates fear – ears back, tail held low.

Recommendations:

- Identify what is frightening your dog and desensitize him to it (see our handouts, "Helping Your Dog Overcome the Fear of Thunder and Other Startling Noises" and "Stress Relief for Your Pet").
- Mute noise from outside by leaving your dog in a basement or windowless bathroom and leave on a television, radio or loud fan. Block off your dog's access to outdoor views that might be causing a fear response, by closing curtains or doors to certain rooms.

Separation Anxiety

Your dog may be barking due to separation anxiety if:

- The barking occurs only when you're gone and starts as soon as, or shortly after, you leave.
- Your dog displays other behaviors that reflect a strong attachment to you, such as following you from room to room, frantic greetings or reacting anxiously to your preparations to leave.
- Your dog has recently experienced a change in the family's schedule that results in his being left alone more often; a move to a new house; the death or loss of a family member or another family pet; or a period at an animal shelter or boarding kennel.

Recommendations:

- Separation anxiety may be resolved using counter-conditioning and desensitization techniques (see our handouts, "Separation Anxiety" and "Stress Relief for Your Pet").

Bark Collars

Bark collars are specially designed to deliver an aversive whenever your dog barks. There are several different kinds of bark collars:

- **Citronella Collar:** This collar contains a reservoir of citronella solution that sprays up towards your dog's face every time he barks. A citronella collar is considered humane and does work with dogs that find the citronella smell and spray sound aversive. One possible drawback is that the collar contains a microphone, so the aversive is delivered in response to the sound of the bark. Therefore, other noises may set off the collar, causing your dog to be sprayed even if he did not bark. Also, some dogs can tell when the citronella reservoir is empty and will resume barking. You can also purchase a citronella collar that is activated by a handler.
- **Aversive Sound Collar:** This collar emits a high-frequency sound when your dog barks. Some are activated by the noise of the bark, while others are activated by a handler. The rate of success for this type of collar is reported to be quite low.
- **Electric Shock Collar: WE DO NOT RECOMMEND** an electric shock collar to control your dog's barking. The electric shock is painful to your dog and many dogs will choose to endure the pain and continue barking. These collars are expensive and their success rate is very low. Also, redirected aggression toward people or pets that are around the dog may result.

The main drawback of any bark collar is that it does not address the underlying cause of the barking. You may be able to eliminate the barking, but symptom substitution may occur and your dog may begin digging, escaping or become destructive or even aggressive. The use of a citronella or aversive sound bark collar must be in conjunction with behavior modification based on the reason for the barking, as outlined above. You should never use a bark collar on your dog if his barking is due to separation anxiety, fears or phobias, because punishment always makes fear and anxiety behaviors worse.

Aversives For Dogs

An aversive is something that your dog finds unpleasant. It can be used to discourage her from a particular action or place. Aversives are most effective when you also offer a pleasant alternative to the place or action you need your pet to avoid. Please experiment cautiously and sparingly when choosing an aversive as individual responses will vary. An aversive that is mildly unpleasant for one dog may be terrifying for another and have no effect on yet another. The goal is to apply the aversive at a level that will cause your dog to avoid the action or place without becoming fearful.

Using Textures as Aversives

Apply these textures to places you need your dog to avoid, and add toys or treats to appropriate places to make them more attractive.

Indoors

- Shelf paper with the sticky side up
- Double-sided carpet tape

Outdoors

- Irregular/sharp rocks set firmly into dirt
- Chicken wire set firmly into dirt with the sharp edges rolled under

Both

- Heavy plastic carpet runner with the pointed side up

You may need to weight the material firmly or tape it to keep it in place. To protect furniture or floor finishes from sticky substances, attach the aversive material to a piece of foil or heavy plastic and secure that with weights or light tape. Texture aversives are more effective for puppies, small dogs and low-confidence dogs than for those that won't let a little obstacle stand in their way. Easy-to-attach, commercial varieties of texture aversives are available from most pet supply stores.

Using Tastes as Aversives

Apply these substances to places where your dog's mouth should not be, and offer an appropriate item to chew on instead.

- Bitter Apple or similar sprays and gels marketed specifically for taste aversion
- Some hot sauces
- Cayenne pepper
- Citrus odors (colognes, concentrated juices or fresh peels)
- Aloe gel

Some of these substances may damage furniture or floor finishes, so be sure to test them in a hidden location first. Except for hot sauce and cayenne pepper, these substances should be safe to apply to human skin; however, some individuals may be sensitive to them.

Surprise!

Remote-controlled Aversives:

Available at pet supply stores or easy to make at home, these items are activated by the dog's behavior, so the owner need not be present to apply them.

- Motion detector that reacts with a startling sound or a spray of water
- Snappy Trainer® or an upside-down mouse trap that is securely taped under paper to avoid contact
- Aluminum pie plate or cookie sheet containing water, pennies, beans or pebbles – preferably balanced precariously
- Scat Mat® (gives a slight static shock)

Human-controlled Aversives:

Use these to interrupt the undesirable behavior; then offer an appropriate alternative.

- Spray bottle or squirt gun filled with water or a combination of water and a little citronella oil. (NOTE: Avoid the Super-Soaker® water guns that have a very forceful spray.)
- Loud air horn
- Whistle
- Shaker can (soda can containing nails, pennies, beans or pebbles, with the opening securely taped shut)

WARNING: For fearful dogs, avoid using surprise techniques, especially noises. Also, remember to start out with the lowest level aversive first and experiment cautiously to see what works for your pet.

Dog Toys and How to Use Them

Many behavior problems in dogs are the result of boredom or excess energy. Toys offer mental and physical stimulation and enrichment. Directing your dog's energy into play with toys can prevent or help resolve such problems as digging and chewing on furniture, shoes or shrubbery.

Toys We Recommend

Interactive Toys: These are toys that require your participation:

▶ Fetch toys – many dogs enjoy chasing balls and Frisbees®. Oddly shaped rubber toys (such as Kongs®) bounce erratically and make the game more fun. Flying disks come in many shapes and sizes, including soft versions that are easier on the dog's mouth. And devices for throwing the ball increase the distance the dog must run to get the toy.

▶ Rope toys, such as Tire Biter® toys, are good for tugging. See note below on playing tug-of-war with your dog.

Distraction Toys: These are toys that keep your dog busy when you don't have the time to play:

▶ *Food Delivery Toys:* Designed to be used with kibble or small treats, the dog must manipulate the toy with his mouth and/or paws to get the food to fall out. Some examples are: Buster Cube®, TreatStik®, Tug-a-Jug®, Kibble Nibble® and Everlasting Fun Ball®.

▶ *Chew Toys:*

- Hard rubber toys that are hollow with holes at both ends, such as Kongs, are good chew toys. To make these toys more attractive, they can be filled with kibble or treats. You can also encourage chewing by putting a small amount of peanut butter or cream cheese inside the toy.
- Dental chew toys are hard toys that the dog can gnaw on and safely ingest small particles. Examples include: Greenies®, bullie sticks, and Petrodex® dental chews. You should watch your dog to make sure he does not break off and ingest large pieces of these toys.
- Chew challenge toys are toys that make an edible chewy more challenging for the dog to consume. Examples include Funny Bones®, the Kong Goodie Bone®, and the Everlasting Treat Ball®.

▶ *Puzzle Toys:*

- Food puzzle toys require the dog to solve a puzzle in order to get treats. Examples are the Nina Ottoson® line of dog toys including the Dog Spinny® and the Dog Brick®.
- Toy puzzle toys require the dog to solve a puzzle to get to a toy. Examples are the Kygen® line of toys, including the IQube®, Intellibone®, and Hide-a-Bee®.

Comfort Toys:

- Soft stuffed toys are good for several purposes but are not appropriate for all dogs. For some dogs, the stuffed toy should be small enough to carry around. For dogs that want to shake or "kill" the toy, it should be the size that "prey" would be for that size dog (mouse-size, rabbit-size or duck-size).
- Dirty laundry, like an old T-shirt, pillowcase, towel or blanket, can be very comforting to a dog, especially if it smells like you! Be forewarned that the item could be destroyed by industrious fluffing, carrying and nosing.

Getting The Most Out Of Toys

- Rotate your dog's toys weekly by making only four or five toys available at a time. Keep a variety of types easily accessible. If your dog has a favorite comfort toy, like a soft "baby," you should probably leave it out all the time.
- Provide toys that offer a variety of uses - at least one toy to carry, one to "kill," one to roll and one to "baby."
- "Hide and Seek" is a fun game for dogs to play. "Found" toys are often much more attractive. Making an interactive game out of finding toys or treats is a good rainy-day activity for your dog, using up

energy without the need for a lot of space. For example, scattering a handful of kibble in the grass or on a patterned carpet will require your dog to use his nose to find the food.

- Many of your dog's toys should be interactive. Interactive play is very important for your dog because he needs active "people time." By focusing on a specific task, like repeatedly returning a ball, Kong or Frisbee, or playing "hide-and-seek" with treats or toys, your dog can expend pent-up mental and physical energy in a limited amount of time and space. This greatly reduces stress due to confinement, isolation and/or boredom. For young, high-energy and untrained dogs, interactive play also offers an opportunity for socialization and helps them learn about appropriate and inappropriate behavior, such as jumping up or being mouthy.

Tug of War

Tug of war has long been thought to be an absolute "don't" in many dog-owning households. However, by taking a few precautions and setting some basic rules it can be a fun game for you and your dog.

- Choose a toy that will be reserved exclusively for this particular activity. This will help prevent your dog from grabbing and tugging anything you have in your hand.
- Teach two commands:
 - o "Let's tug" begins the game. Never allow the dog to initiate tug on his own and always use your starting phrase when you begin the game.
 - o "Give" or "Out" ends the game. Teach your dog to release the toy by offering a treat or better toy in exchange. Do not start playing tug with your dog until he is consistently releasing the toy on command.

Safety

There are many factors that contribute to the safety or danger of a toy. Many of those factors are dependent upon your dog's size, activity level and play style. Although we cannot guarantee your dog's enthusiasm or his safety with any specific toy, we can offer the following guidelines:

- Toys should be appropriate for your dog's current size. Balls and other toys that are too small can be easily swallowed or become lodged in your dog's mouth or throat.
- Avoid or alter any toys that are not "dog-proof" by removing ribbons, strings, eyes or other parts that could be chewed off and ingested.
- Monitor your dog's toys and discard any toy that starts to break into pieces or has pieces torn off.
- Ask your veterinarian about the safety of items like bones, hooves, pig's ears and rawhides. Very hard rubber toys are safer and last longer.
- Take note of any toy that contains a "squeaker" buried in its center. Your dog may feel that he must find and destroy the squeak source and could ingest it, in which case squeaking toys should be given only under supervision.
- Know your dogs chewing habits before leaving him alone with any toy. For example, some dogs will carry a plush toy around for years. Others will enjoy "disemboweling" the toy by pulling all the stuffing out. Still others will chew it apart and ingest the pieces, creating a safety hazard for that dog.

Nothing In Life Is Free

Does your dog: Get on the furniture and refuse to get off? Nudge your hand, insisting on being petted or played with? Refuse to come when called? Defend its food bowl or toys from you? "Nothing in life is free" can help. "Nothing in life is free" is not a magic pill that will solve a specific behavior problem; rather it's a way of living with your dog that will help it behave better because it trusts and accepts you as its leader and is confident knowing its place in your family.

How To Practice "Nothing In Life Is Free:"

- Using positive reinforcement methods, teach your dog a few commands and/or tricks. "Sit," "Down" and "Stay" are useful commands and "Shake," "Speak" and "Rollover" are fun tricks to teach your dog.
- Once your dog knows a few commands, you can begin to practice "nothing in life is free." Before you give your dog anything (food, a treat, a walk, a pat on the head) it must first perform one of the commands it has learned. For example:

YOU:

Put your dog's leash on to go for a walk
Feed your dog
Play a game of fetch after work
Rub your dog's belly while watching TV

YOUR DOG:

Must sit until you've put the leash on
Must lie down and stay until you've put the bowl down
Must sit and shake hands each time you throw the toy
Must lie down and rollover before being petted

- Once you've given the command, don't give your dog what it wants until it does what you want. If it refuses to perform the command, walk away, come back a few minutes later and start again. If your dog refuses to obey the command, be patient and remember that eventually it will have to obey your command in order to get what it wants.
- Make sure your dog knows the command well and understands what you want before you begin practicing "nothing in life is free."

The Benefits of This Technique:

- Most dogs assume a neutral or submissive role toward people, but some dogs will challenge their owners for dominance. Requiring a dominant dog to work for everything it wants is a safe and non-confrontational way to establish control.
- Dogs who may never display aggressive behavior such as growling, snarling, or snapping, may still manage to manipulate you. These dogs may display affectionate, though "pushy" behavior, such as nudging your hand to be petted or "worming" its way on to the furniture in order to be close to you. This technique gently reminds the "pushy" dog that it must abide by your rules.
- Obeying commands helps build a fearful dog's confidence; having a strong leader and knowing its place in the hierarchy helps to make the submissive dog feel more secure.

Why This Technique Works:

Animals that live in groups, like dogs, establish a social structure within the group called a dominance hierarchy. This dominance hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict and promote cooperation among pack members. In order for your home to be a safe and happy place for pets and people, it's best that the humans in the household assume the highest positions in the dominance hierarchy. Practicing "nothing in life is free" effectively and gently communicates to your dog that its position in the hierarchy is subordinate to yours. From your dog's point of view, children also have a place in this hierarchy. Because children are small and can get down on the dog's level to play, dogs often consider them to be playmates, rather than superiors. With the supervision of an adult, it's a good idea to encourage children in the household (aged eight and over) to also practice "nothing in life is free" with your dog.



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Pet Behavior Helpline Online Counsel Request Form

Use this form to reach a trained behavior counselor at the Dumb Friends League, who will contact you by phone or e-mail (whichever you choose) to help solve the behavior problem you're experiencing. Expect a response within two to four days. This service is free.

Our Pet Behavior Helpline counselors have completed an extensive training program taught by animal behavior professionals. They are able to assist pet owners with many types of problems; however, there are some that can't be resolved by email or phone, because it isn't safe or accurate to diagnose certain problems without observing the animal's postures and reactions to certain stimuli. Please read more information about when our helpline can't help.

You can also reach us by phone:
(303) 751-3772, Ext. 1359, Dog and Cat Behavior
1-877-735-0217 Non-Denver metro residents, toll-free

Fields marked with * are required.

*First Name

*Last Name

*Address

(Maximum response 255 chars, approx. 5 rows of text)

*City

*State
Please select

*Zip

*Phone Number

Best time to reach you there
Please select

Additional Phone Number

Best time to reach you there
Please select

*E-mail Address

* How would you prefer to be contacted?

- Phone
- E-mail

Number of children 0-5 years of age in home:
Please select

Number of children 5-8 years in the home:
Please select

Number of children 9-14 years of age in the home:
Please select

Number of adults (over age 14) in the home:
Please select

* Type of animal with behavior issue

- Cat
- Dog
- Other

Name of animal _____

* Did you adopt this animal from the Dumb Friends League?

- Yes
- No

If not, where did you obtain this animal? _____

(Maximum response 255 chars, approx. 5 rows of text)

*How long have you had that animal? _____

*Age of animal _____

* Sex of animal

- Spayed female
- Neutered male
- Female
- Male

Breed _____

If this animal is a cat, is it declawed?

- Yes
- No

* Approximate date of last visit to the veterinarian

Month: Day: Year:
Month Day Year

Nature of that visit _____

(Maximum response 255 chars, approx. 5 rows of text)

How did you hear about the Dumb Friends League?

- Always known
- Internet search engine
- Yellow pages
- Word of mouth
- Other

* Are you considering giving up your pet because of this behavior problem?

- Yes
- No

* Is this the first pet for at least one adult in the home?

- Yes
- No

Other pets currently in the home

Type

- Cat
- Dog
- Other

Age _____

Breed _____

Sex

SEARCH

- Spayed female
- Neutered male
- Female
- Male

Type

- Cat
- Dog
- Other

Age _____

Breed _____

Sex

- Spayed female
- Neutered male
- Female
- Male

Type

- Cat
- Dog
- Other

Age _____

Breed _____

Sex

- Spayed female
- Neutered male
- Female
- Male

Briefly describe the behavior problem: _____



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