

RETURNING TO WORK AND WORRIED ABOUT PET SEPARATION ANXIETY?

How to Prepare Fido for Alone Time



Have your co-workers been of the four-legged kind lately? You're not alone. Many dogs have been our co-workers in these past years, and as you prepare to work outside of the home, now is the time to help prepare your dog for this transition. The good news - separation anxiety is not caused by spending too much time with your dog or by giving your dog lots of attention.

Separation anxiety is a medical condition caused by fear where dogs experience distress and panic attacks when alone. If your dog did not have separation anxiety before, or a predisposition to it, most dogs will not develop this fear during your time at home and back to work/school transition. However dogs do thrive on routine, and when theirs or our routines have changed, we can start to see behaviour changes in our dogs. This is a good time to start to prepare our pets for another change in routine before heading back to work/school.

Tips to Help Your Dog Adapt:

1. Leave your house, without taking your dog. Fido needs some alone time, too. Go get the mail, take a walk around the block or sit outside and enjoy a book for a while, all without your dog.
2. Stick to a routine. Try to keep mealtime, walks and other activities as predictable and close to your normal routine as possible. This means that unless Fido is going to get five walks a day when you go back to work, then he shouldn't be getting that many now. This will help Fido transition back more easily when it happens without causing another abrupt change in routine.
3. Practice separation now, even if you're still working from home. We all love to have our dogs near us when we're working, but it is worth trying some planned separation time. Have your own dedicated work space and set Fido up with a long-lasting chew, frozen stuffed Kong or another enrichment toy for a few hours while you work in another area of the home.
4. Reach out for help if Fido is showing signs of anxiety or distress. Often separation anxiety manifests in vocalization, destruction, house accidents, anorexia and self-injury. If your dog exhibits any of these, refer to a certified trainer for help.