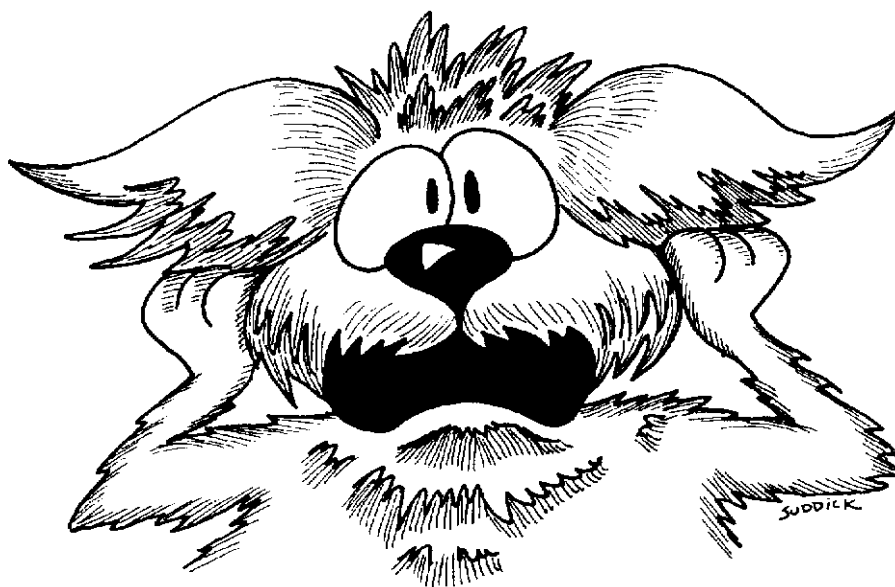


Home Alone



If you own a dog, you're one of at least 63 million Americans who share their lives with canines. However, most of these households are also empty during the day, leaving the family dog home alone.

Dogs are not naturally solitary animals, so when they're left alone, they may exhibit annoying or destructive behaviors. If your dog becomes aggressive toward you when you try to leave the house or if she chews, digs, house soils, or barks excessively when you're gone, she's suffering from separation anxiety. Obtaining another companion animal to keep her company probably won't work. It's *your* absence, not the lack of another animal, that is causing her anxiety.

How can you help your dog? First, don't punish her. Dogs associate punishment with what they are doing the instant it is administered. When you come home and punish your dog (for something she did earlier), she will think the punishment is for what she was doing the moment you became angry, which was enthusiastically greeting you.

Second, change your behaviors or routine. Your dog's anxiety begins when you indicate through your actions that you're about to leave without her. To get your dog accustomed to your leaving, pick up your keys and walk towards the door, but don't leave the house. Do this several times until your dog no longer exhibits anxious behavior.

The next step is to leave the house for *a few minutes* at a time. Gradually increase these planned absences so that your dog never has a chance to show any separation anxiety. When you return, greet your dog briefly (don't gush) and return to normal activities. This training may take some time, but it's a worthwhile effort.



animal protection league
JOHNSTON COUNTY

P.O. BOX 607 • SMITHFIELD, NC 27577
PHONE: 919-422-6002

www.jcapl.org

Provided by
AMERICAN
HUMANE
ASSOCIATION 63 Inverness Drive East
Englewood, CO 80112