



Canine Anxiety and How to Deal With It

There are many causes that could be triggering anxiety in your dog. When your dog exhibits signs and symptoms of anxiety, try these solutions.

SYMPTOMS

No matter the type of anxiety your dog is experiencing, symptoms are almost universal across the board. Pacing, hiding, excessive grooming, barking, chewing/ destruction, shaking, panting, tucked tail, and urinating/defecating inside are the most common symptoms. Another indicator that these are stress-induced actions is the repetitiveness—such as incessant barking, pacing, and grooming—which will clue you in that something is wrong if your dog does not usually exhibit these behaviors to this degree. Less common symptoms include unusual aggression, eating their own feces, attempting to escape, and excessive energy.

SOLUTIONS

There is no one-size-fits-all solution or cure for anxiety, and remember that punishment and aversion techniques do not work in the long run. Try some of these remedies and see if one works for your dog. If not, talk to your vet about other options.

Desensitization

Desensitization works by slowly exposing your dog to the cause of his anxiety. This mainly works with controllable issues, such as crate, car, and separation anxiety. Begin by exposing your dog to the stimulus, but do it slowly and for short periods of time. Work on eye contact and simple obedience commands that keep them focused. Reward them for good behavior to reinforce staying calm in the presence of anxiety-inducing triggers. Work up to longer periods of exposure, always with positive reinforcement, and eventually

Types of Anxiety

- Separation
- Travel
- Confinement
- Noise
- Illness-induced
- Rescue/Former Shelter
- General





Some Dog Breeds Prone to Anxiety

- German & Australian Shepherds
- Labrador Retriever
- Border Collie
- Cocker Spaniel
- Bichon Frise
- Jack Russell Terrier

your dog will learn that they won't be hurt by the cause of their anxiety.

Fixed Routine

Some dogs with general anxiety or former rescue dogs become stressed over seemingly nothing. However, it could be the unpredictability of your actions that is causing them stress. Create a calm environment and a fixed routine to help your dog relax and stay calm. Wake up at the same time to bring them outside to go to the bathroom, feed them at the same time every day, take them for a walk and create play times at fixed intervals, and find some toys that bring them happiness. Also refrain from rearranging their belongings

around the house and creating loud/unnecessary noises. Leaving them a shirt or blanket that smells like you whenever you leave could also greatly reduce their stress during alone time.

Calming Equipment

There are products available that are specifically for reducing pet anxiety. Thundershirts and anxiety vests create pressure, reproducing the effect of being hugged or swaddled, which causes the release of feel-good endorphins. Essential oils have become increasingly popular—just make sure you are using canine-safe, high-quality oils. Never give essential oils for them to ingest and use carrier oils when applying straight to the body; diffusers are the safest option. Another fairly new option are CBD products. There is limited scientific data but lots of positive anecdotes from pet owners.

Medication

Lastly, standard medication works to calm your dog. You should only give your dog vet-prescribed medications in order to be fully informed on the dosage and possible side-effects. Medication is also not a long-term solution and should be used sparingly.

Although there are many causes of anxiety for your pet, there are also many solutions. Dogs are social animals by nature, have enhanced hearing and senses, and aren't always able to communicate to us what exactly is the problem. Make sure to show them lots of love, train them adequately, and reduce anxiety-inducing stimuli when possible for a happy, healthy pet. **TVP**