

Separation anxiety recommendations

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--Read and review Decoding your Dog book and handouts that were given today.

--Recommend playing Through a Dog's Ear music at home throughout the day, but especially during stressful times. This is classical music that is acoustically designed to calm your dog. Their website is www.throughadogsear.com. Pandora and Spotify also have calming dog classical music stations. Here is an audio sample of the Through A Dog's ear music:

<http://www.soundstrue.com/store/through-a-dog-s-ear-4952.html>

--A new nutritional supplement to help reduce anxiety, such as pacing, whining, and barking called Purina Pro Plan Calming Care is now available. This is a flavored probiotic supplement that is sprinkled on your dog's food daily and has been shown to reduce stress hormones and help promote a calm emotional state. If you are interested in trying this, please let Dr. Hawker know and she will dispense a 6 week supply.

--Recommend using food puzzles for at least 50% of your dog's meals for mental stimulation and to decrease anxiety. Try to purchase several different ones and rotate their use. Use Kongs, Kong Wobblers, Busy Buddy food toys, Northmate interactive pet feeder, Trixie pet puzzles, Buster cubes, Outward Hound puzzles, and Planet Dog Orbee Tuff Snoop. These puzzles and many more can all be found on www.amazon.com. For Kong recipe ideas, go to their website, www.kongcompany.com/recipes. To make an enrichment box for your dog, place treats, food or stuffed Kongs into empty toilet paper and paper towel rolls, paper bags and cardboard boxes (cereal and cracker boxes work well). Offer them to your dog under your supervision. Ripping apart the box and finding the food is a great stress reliever and mental enrichment for your dog. Check out this website for some more mental enrichment ideas:

<http://www.themoderndogtrainer.net/mental-stimulation-ideas-for-dogs/>

--Consider using an Adaptil collar or diffuser in the home. The collar needs to be kept snug around the neck (2 fingers should be able to fit under the collar). Wear at all times, but take off prior to bathing and swimming. Replace monthly. This is a pheromone collar that replicates the calming smell that a puppy gets when nursing from its mother. These are also available from Amazon. Use for 3 months to determine its effectiveness. The diffuser is the same product but diffuses the pheromone into the air. Place the diffuser in the main living area. One diffuser covers 750 sq ft.

--Make all departures and arrivals at home very calm. Do not talk to him in a happy, excited tone--this only heightens his anxiety. Instead, ignore him when he is anxious and only talk to him to ask him to go into his crate 10-20 mins before you leave, put a Kong in there with him and shut the door. When coming home, open the crate to let him out and only talk to him in a calm manner. Let him outside to go to the bathroom, and reward calm behavior by then petting him in a calm voice.

--Try feeding your dog all of his meals in his crate so he associates the crate with good things. Feeding him meals out of food puzzles in the crate would be helpful to keep her occupied while in the crate. Start by feeding him his food at the front of the crate and watch his body language to see how comfortable he is. After several days, if he is doing well, move the food bowl in a little more. Continue to do this until the food bowl is in the back of the crate. Then once he is doing well at this stage, try

closing the door of the crate while he is eating. Then open the door a few minutes after he is done eating. If at any time, he stops eating, then he is too nervous and you need to go back to the previous step and work on that for a few days until he is more relaxed.

--Start putting your dog in the crate for short periods of time when you are home. Feed him high value treats in there. We want your dog to learn that going in the crate does not mean that you are leaving. You can sit in the crate next to him and read or watch TV. Start with short periods of time and work up to longer periods of time. Wait until he is calm and not barking (even if only for a few seconds) to let him out of the crate.

--Some dogs are much more anxious in the crate and do better when left out of the crate when left home alone or gated into the kitchen. Do what works best for your dog and start by leaving them for a few minutes at a time to see how they do.

--I recommend purchasing an indoor wi-fi security camera such as Tervis IP camera (\$40), Nexgadget security camera (\$65) that can be purchased from Amazon to monitor your dog's anxiety and how long it lasts when you leave and throughout the day. Make sure it has an SD card so it records and stores the video, rather than only allowing live video. This way you can go back and review the video from the day. It will help us to see if our treatment plan is working.

-There is now an FDA approved non-drug therapy available for dogs experiencing separation anxiety. The Calmer Canine loop is a loop that uses a battery to emit a specifically tuned microcurrent signal to reduce overactive brain cells and the inflammatory substances that are produced with anxiety. The loop is used for 15 minutes twice daily for 4-6 weeks. Studies have shown a significant reduction in anxiety in all of the dogs that participated in the study within 4-6 weeks. The battery is replaceable. www.calmerk9.com

--Consider asking friends and family to temporarily stay with your dog or take your dog to daycare 2-3 times per week while you are at work for the next 4-6 weeks until we can get the medications to work.

--Once the medications are reducing your dog's anxiety in 6-8 weeks, we can discuss at the recheck appointment ways to incorporate behavior modification and teaching your dog to become desensitized to your departure cues.