

PET CANDY'S GUIDE TO DOG BEHAVIOR

Why dogs misbehave
and what to do about it?



Edited by Dr. Shannon Gregoire

With | Dr. Amy Pike
Dr. Sally Foote
Dr. Vanessa Spano

Brought to you by

Reconcile[®]
(fluoxetine hydrochloride)

Pet Candy

Pet Candy Media

Dr. Jill Lopez
Editor in Chief

Omar A. Lopez
Creative Director

Shannon Gregoire
Assistant Editor

Yagmur Karaman
Design Editor

Eoin Finnegan
Copy and Research Editor

Published by
Vet Candy Media

Chief Executive Officer
Dr. Jill Lopez

Vet Candy trademark and logo are owned by
Vet Candy, LLC
Copyright ©2022

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in crucial reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests write to hello@myvetcandy.com.

PET CANDY'S GUIDE TO DOG BEHAVIOR

Why dogs misbehave and what to do about it?



Edited by **Dr. Shannon Gregoire**



Brought to you by **Reconcile[®]**
(fluoxetine hydrochloride)

Contents

About the experts

5

Introduction

10

Chapter 1 | How Dogs Love

How Dogs Love 11

Fun things to do with your dog 12

Chapter 2 | How dog breeds differ

How dog breeds differ 13

Five doggie personalities 14

Chapter 3 | How dogs think

How dogs think 15

Chapter 4 | How dogs communicate

How dogs communicate 16

How Smart is a dog really? 17

Five ways to communicate with your dog 18

Chapter 5 | How dogs work

How dogs work 19

Chapter 6 | How dogs play

Dog play decoded 20

Ways to socialize your new dog/puppy 21

How to meet other dog lovers 22

Fun dog-friendly dates 23

Chapter 7 | How dogs learn

How dogs learn 24

What is the BOND behavior modification training plan?..... 25

10 ways to puppy proof your home 26

Decoding dog body language 27

The ABC's of potty training 29

Contents

Chapter 8 | How dogs behave badly

Understanding house soiling	31
Understanding destructive behavior	32
Understanding anxiety in dogs	33
Tips for dealing with separation anxiety	34
Understanding fear in your dog	35
Understanding dog aggression	36
Can noises cause anxiety in dogs?	37
The Case of the Fraidy Pup	38
The Case of Cali's Separation Anxiety	41
Buddy's Story	43
Gemma's Story	44

Chapter 9 | When and how to get help

When and how to get help	45
--------------------------------	-----------

Chapter 10 | How to prevent problems

How to prevent problems	46
-------------------------------	-----------

About the experts

Dr. Vanessa Spano currently provides veterinary behavior support for the ASPCA adoption animals and victims of animal cruelty and hoarding. She provides educational sessions and symposia for veterinary students and shelters on science-based training, animal welfare, and behavior disorders.

Dr. Amy Pike is a board certified veterinary behaviorist and the owner of the Animal Behavior Wellness Center in Fairfax, VA. Previously, she served as a Captain into the Army Veterinary Corps where she took care of Military Working Dogs returning from deployment.

Dr Sally J Foote is a small animal veterinarian with a behavior practice in Tuscola Illinois. She has owned Okaw Veterinary Clinic for over 25 years, and in that course developed a passion for helping owners prevent behavior problems as well as helping resolve them.

Am I alone?



HELLO!?
Is anyone there?



**Seriously
though;
are you
coming back?**



**I'm freaking
out now!**



Dogs don't grow out of separation anxiety.

Learn more about separation anxiety and behavior modification plans at **Reconcile.com** or talk to your veterinarian to learn more.



Reconcile[®]
(fluoxetine hydrochloride)
Affordable. Reliable. Chewable.

Important Safety Information: The most common adverse events in decreasing order of reported frequency are: decreased appetite, depression/lethargy, shaking/shivering/tremor, vomiting, restlessness and anxiety, seizures, aggression, diarrhea, mydriasis, vocalization, weight loss, panting, confusion, incoordination, and hypersalivation. Reconcile[®] chewable tablets are contraindicated for dogs with a history of seizures or when used with MAOIs. Reconcile chewable tablets are indicated for the treatment of canine separation anxiety in conjunction with a behavior modification plan. Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian. Visit Reconcile.com to view full prescribing information.



Introduction

By: Dr. Shannon Gregoire

Dogs have earned a reputation for being “man’s best friend.” If you have experienced the joys of having a dog in your life, then you no doubt understand why!

For over 30,000 years, humans and canines worked together to develop a special relationship. In fact, archaeologists have discovered ancient cave drawings which depict this human-animal bond on practically every corner of the earth. From the pyramids of Egypt to the rock sites of Saudi Arabia to ink paintings in imperial China, the dog has been a loyal friend to mankind. Different breeds served different purposes. Livestock herding, personal protection, hunting retrievers, vermin chasers...the list goes on and on.

Of course, times have changed. Nowadays, dogs are mostly companions. Fido isn’t off chasing wild board anymore. Or guarding the doors to a palace. Instead, our pets enjoy a life of leisure napping on soft beds in airconditioned homes.

Yet, their lives have changed in some ways. With the pandemic uprooting all sense of normalcy, it’s important to consider the effect that this has had on our dogs. For example behavioral issues have soared. Across all breeds, routines have been disrupted. There are less opportunities to socialize. Training has also been interrupted or put on hold. In short, our pup’s worlds were totally turned upside down!

According to the ASPCA approximately 3.1 million dogs are surrendered or placed in U.S. animal shelters every year. Unfortunately, behavioral issues are the #1 reason why dogs end up in shelters.

But there is good news!

Dog owners, such as yourself, quite literally save the life of a pet with proper training. We simply must learn to listen to our dogs, communicate effectively, correct bad behaviors, and respond appropriately. With a little love and lots of patience, almost all issues can be overcome.

Remember...there is no such thing as a bad dog. Only a dog who needs help.

That is why we teamed up with some amazing veterinary behavioralists to create this amazing resource for pet parents everywhere. We want to give you the tools to recognize warning signs for dog behavior problems, suggest what to do, who to see, and ultimately where to get help.

This book will also guide readers on how to set a puppy up for success early on to stop future behavioral issues from forming in the first place.

A special thank you to PRN Pharmacal, makers of Reconcile® (fluoxetine hydrochloride). Reconcile is an FDA-approved medication for the treatment of separation anxiety in dogs in conjunction with behavior modification training. You can learn more about it at reconcile.com.

So, find your dog, grab some treats, and we will see you in Chapter 1: How dogs love.

How Dogs Love

By Dr. Jill Lopez

From running wild in wolfpacks to the cuddly fluffballs we call pets today, dogs have come a long way. The evolution from wolf to dog is a fascinating story. It's a tale of survival, trust building, and friendship between species.

Curious about how an untamed wolf turned into your loving fur baby?

Let's explore the domestication of dogs.



How Did Wolves Become "Man's Best Friend?"

To truly understand how dogs love, we must go back 15,000 to 40,000 years. At this time, our ancestors were roaming the earth in hunter-gatherer communities. Archaeological records and fossil evidence suggest one of two things occurred:

- ♥ Humans took wolf pups and raised them by hand
- ♥ Wolves started to spend time around people as a source of easy food

Generally speaking, most researchers agree that the latter option probably occurred more often. Since early humans were talented hunters themselves who successfully tracked down deer, giant elk, woolly mammoths, etc. there would be leftover bones, meat, and scraps. The smell naturally attracted scavengers, including wolves.

Wild wolves would linger around a human encampment and hope to get a bite of those yummy leftovers. Time passed. Eventually, the wolves became friendlier, less fearful of the humans, and more comfortable approaching these strange two-legged animals that were such a wonderful source of effortless food – AKA us!

The relationship was built on survival and trust. It wasn't exactly love, per se. But over thousands of years, wolves slowly became less "dangerous predator" and more "friendly animal companion."

The Transition from Scary looking Wolf to Cute Puppy

Nowadays, dogs love us for more than our ability to provide food. And we love them right back!

But how did those frightening giant wolves transform into adorable pups? Especially considering some dog breeds, like the French Bulldog or Golden Retriever for example, don't appear to be "wolfish" at all?

Well, it turns out that modern-day dogs are actually descendants of a subspecies of a smaller gray wolf, as described in Dog Discoveries. This, plus thousands upon thousands of years of selective breeding, is what led to the floppy ears, button noses, and distinctive breed characteristics we all own today.

The domesticated wolves soon became watchdogs, hunting partners, and livestock guardians. Later, they fulfilled the role of companion. Some working breeds have retained their original purpose (like hunting deer, ducks, rats, or herding sheep) while others were bred purely to be beloved family pets.

It's hard to believe your snuggly fluffball descended from ancient wolves, isn't it?

Yet all dogs have a tiny drop of wolf blood coursing through their veins. The changes we describe happened over lifetimes. One thing that hasn't changed, however, is the mutual love shared between humans and their canine counterparts!



Fun things to do with your dog

By **Lauren Hodges**

Your dog is your best friend, your family, your protector, but they're also your adventure partner! Dogs love to do things with their humans, but sometimes it's hard to find activities to do, especially during today's state of the world. So, just like your dog, I did some digging and came up with some fun things you can do with your pup! The best part is they are all pandemic approved!

Hiking

By far the most popular option, taking your doggo hiking will not only make them happy, but will also make you feel productive, healthy, and energized! This is a great option if you live in an area that has local trails, but make sure the trails allow dogs! If you do not live near any hiking trails, going for a simple walk through an area you've never been to is also a fantastic option.

Go Swimming

If your dog is a fan of the water, take him or her to a nearby lake to do some swimming together! Get creative with it by bringing (or renting) paddle boards – they're big enough for more than one person, let your furry friend tag along! If you're fortunate enough to own a pontoon or small boat, bring your dog with you, at the very least, they can get a nice tan!

Have a Photoshoot

Hear me out, there is nothing cuter than a dog dressed as a bunny or a fire fighter or even dressed to the nines in a suit! You don't even have to spend money here, just find some old Halloween costumes or even your own hat collection, lay a white sheet behind you and set that self-timer to 10 seconds! Not only will you create some silly memories, but your dog will have a blast! You could even turn your photos into a calendar, how cute would that be?

Have a Spa Day

Believe it or not, there are actually spas that are designed for you and your pup! This is a great activity for older dogs (or dogs who are tame) who just need a few hours to unwind from that long game of fetch you played the other day! Pet/owner spas tend to go all out with their services, even offering doggie massages, grooming services, and snack boards!

Go on a Long Drive

Perfect for those of you trying to avoid crowds right now, taking a scenic drive through the mountains, along the coastline, even through a city, is a great option to get you and your pup out of the house for a few hours! Dogs love an open window on an empty road, you cannot go wrong here. Bring some snacks for the two of you, find a nice place to park, and enjoy a little picnic! It's the perfect afternoon!

No matter what you choose to do with your dog, they're going to enjoy it because the activity is being done with their favorite person, you! Whether you're taking them swimming, popping a fedora on them, or treating them to a massage, you won't be disappointed in the memories you create and the smile on your doggy's face!



How Dog Breeds Differ

By Dr. Jill Lopez

Little or big, short or tall, one thing is for sure: we love our dogs! Over thousands of years, humans have carefully bred dogs to create an incredibly wide array of dog breeds. Each of the 197 breeds have unique physical characteristics and temperaments that have gained them a loyal following of dog enthusiasts.



Today, the American Kennel Club (AKC) officially recognizes 7 dog breed groups. Which does your pup fall into?

The 7 dog breed groups include:

1 Sporting Group

Dogs in this category are known for their astounding retrieval skills. Specifically, chasing after fallen feathered game such as ducks and geese. Sporting group dogs are expert swimmers with water-repellant coats. For this reason, people who hunt waterfowl often add a Labrador Retriever, English Setter, German shorthaired Pointer, or Irish Setter to their family.

2 Hound Group

Next up is the hound group. This includes dog breeds like Bloodhounds and Greyhounds. Just as the name implies, hounds are talented runners. They can sprint long distances in pursuit of small mammals such as rabbits, foxes, antelope, etc. Their noses are powerful enough to track animals through wooded forests and fields.

3 Working Group

These dogs are large, muscular, and eager to work! Those in the working group (as defined by the AKC) aren't afraid of tough jobs. In fact, they thrive under working conditions and enjoy laboring alongside their human masters. Siberian Huskies pull sleds across snowy landscapes. Great Danes were bred to hunt wild boar and guard the home. They had jobs – and did them well.

4 Terrier Group

This dog group is similar, but slightly different. Terriers are a smaller version of a dog with a job. Their short legs and long faces made them excellent at hunting down rats, mice, and other rodents who burrow. Originally developed in England, most terriers today are now mostly companion animals.

5 Toy Group

Fifth on the list of how dog breeds differ is the toy group. These pups are cuddle bugs personified. They love affection. Actually, toy group breeds were purposely kept small in size so that they could sit on a person's lap and be carried with ease. Popular breeds include Pugs, Shih Tzus, and Pomeranians.

6 Non-sporting Group

Then there is the special group known as "non-sporting". Many dogs are placed in this category simply because they don't seem to fit perfectly anywhere else on the list. With diverse histories and dissimilar physical traits, these dog breeds are given a spot all to themselves at dog shows. Dalmatians, French Bulldogs, Poodles, Keeshonds, and Bulldogs each fall under this umbrella term.

7 Herding Group

And finally, the very last group – herding dogs. If you have ever lived on a farm and tended to sheep or cattle, it's highly likely there was a herding dog close by. These intelligent pups are smart enough to protect their flock and also trainable, making them ideal canine partners. Collies, Australian Cattle Dogs, and German Shepherds are great examples of dogs who herd.

A Different Dog Breed for Everyone

As you can see, the seven dog breed groups are each special in their own ways. But no matter how dog breeds differ, we know that there is the perfect pup out there for everyone!





Five doggie personalities

Like humans, dogs have unique personalities that define them. Knowing your dog's personality will help you understand him and his behaviors. Read on for five major doggie personalities to find out your dog's personality.

⇒ The Confident Dog ⇐

The Confident Dog is a natural born leader. He is always happy to take charge in whatever situation and can be a team player as well. He is always comfortable in his own team and his surroundings, and often emanates confidence from his body language. Positive reinforcement works best for dogs with this personality type. They might exude dominant behaviors but it is best not to be hard on them because that may result in aggression and stubbornness.

⇒ The Adaptable Dog ⇐

The Adaptable dog is obedient, cooperative, loving, gentle, calm, and always eager to please. Dogs with this personality type will control their excitement to please their owners, unlike happy dogs. The Adaptable dog will be friendly and outgoing, while not being overly ebullient. These dogs get on well with other dogs, cats, and humans.

⇒ The laidback, Happy Dog ⇐

Dogs with this personality type are stereotypical friendly dogs who love cats, people, and other dogs. They are usually very energetic and enthusiastic, and can easily become over-excited, especially without exercise or training. The laidback, Happy Dogs are likely to scare children if they are large or jump to greet people. These dogs need training to keep them calm around others and prevent them from jumping.



⇒ The Shy Dog ⇐

The shy or timid dog can be insecure, nervous, fearful, and/or unconfident. Shy dogs hate being in uncomfortable situations, they tend to react poorly to chaotic environments and loud or sudden sounds. These dogs often respond well to gentle treatment and a lot of treats, praise, and encouragement. Harsh treatment can push your dog to shut down and mistrust you. Furthermore, these dogs need to be introduced to new experiences, places, and people at a slower pace. Don't force your shy dog into uncomfortable situations because he might not see that as a good thing, but rather as you trying to force him into a scary situation. This can make him lose trust in you.

⇒ The Independent Dog ⇐

Dogs with this personality type tend to bond with a few people who they see as their leader, but act indifferently towards others. In fact, an independent dog might not even bond with anyone outside of his family. He is very comfortable with spending time alone and away from crowds which makes them appear distant and cold in manner. They act this way because they have been bred to live independently of people.

An independent dog is difficult to train. He needs the right type of motivation because without the motivation, he would rather "excogitate" for himself than do what you command him to do. You need to experiment to find out what motivates him, from affection to toys, and treats to praise. Harsh treatment may result in loss of trust and/or respect for you. Furthermore, you shouldn't force your independent dog to be social as that could make them aggressive.



How Dogs Think

By Dr. Jill Lopez



When it comes to what's going on inside a dog's head, until recently, nobody really knew.

That's because dog psychology wasn't a huge area of interest. Historically speaking, researchers were far more interested in primates (like chimpanzees and gorillas) because of their close genetic ties to human beings. However, this has all changed. Canine research facilities have since popped up all around the world. Yale University even has an entire department called The Canine Cognition Center!

Yes, MRI scans of a dog's brain and behavioral analysis can teach us a lot about how dogs think.

Have you ever wondered about what's going on inside your dog's noggin? Let's find out.

Why Do Researchers Study Dog-Cognition?

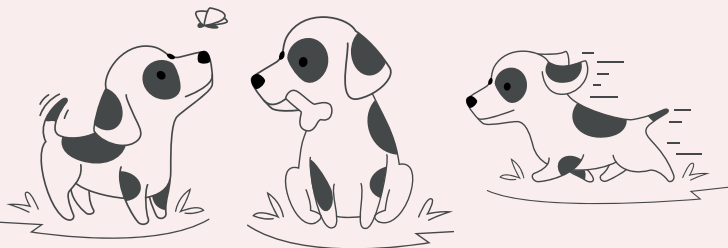


To deeply understand the canine brain, we must reflect inwards and ask ourselves, "Why bother researching dog-cognition in the first place?"

Well, for a couple of reasons!

1 For animal welfare purposes

A goofy smile and wagging tail are sure signs of a happy dog. Or are they? Animal welfare advocates and pet owners alike need dog-cognition studies to learn about a dog's emotional state. Knowing what brings animals joy, arouses fear, triggers anxiety, etc. then informs the decisions we make about how best to care for our four-legged friends.



2 To find out if a dog is well-suited for a job

Secondly, researchers study dog-cognition to discover whether a dog will be a good match for different tasks. For example, scent work, search and rescue, guide dog work, and so on. Puppies are often chosen at a very young age for these jobs. Understanding how dogs think is integral to the selection process.

3 Problem-solving and trainability

Thirdly, dog-cognition is looked at because these studies show us how to better communicate with our pets (and therefore achieve desired results). Think about dog trainers. Why do they use delicious treats during a training session? We don't use food to motivate young children to learn, so why do it with dogs? It all comes down to what the research tells us about how a dog's brain works.

For these three reasons, understanding how dogs think is a worthwhile area of study.



What is My Dog Really Thinking?

It might surprise you to learn that your dog thinks about more than food (seriously!)

In addition to asking how dogs think, we also want to know what dogs think about.

According to **Time Magazine**, a dog's mind is usually focused on the following:

- Rewards
- Pleasure
- Expectation

Everything about a dog's day revolves around one or more of these aspects. From getting excited for a morning neighborhood walk (expectation) to rolling sideways for belly rubs (pleasure) to drooling over yummy treats (rewards) your dog is always thinking.

So, the next time your pooch looks at you with big, eager eyes, know that his brain is fast at work!

How Dogs Communicate

By Dr. Jill Lopez

Chances are, if you share your life with a canine companion, at some point, you have probably wished you could know exactly what they're thinking.

Unlike people, dogs use very different methods to communicate. After all, they cannot have chatty conversations over the phone like we do! While it's impossible to talk to our pets (at least in the traditional sense) by learning how dogs communicate, we can nevertheless learn a lot about their innermost thoughts and feelings.

Ready to find out how?

2 Different Communication Styles:

Verbal vs. Non-Verbal

The biggest difference between how people and dogs communicate has to do with verbal abilities. On one hand, humans use words. There are over 6000 languages in existence today. Each has its own alphabet, dialect, and words that are unique to culture and location.

However, dogs speak only one language – that of canines. This is based primarily on non-verbal cues. To communicate effectively with people and other animals, dogs alter their body language to give off signals or cues.

Their body language can include:

- Facial expression
- Eye and ear movement
- Body position
- Tail placement

Each is carefully changed by a dog to get their point across about their emotional state. In fact, Psychology Today found that between 70-90% of human communication is non-verbal, and that statistic is even higher for dogs!

What does this tell us?

Essentially, that canine communication is far less about what a "woof" means and far more about what their body language is trying to say.

Physical Cues to Watch Out For

When trying to decipher how dogs communicate, you will want to be on the lookout for the following 4 emotions and their accompanying body language:

1 Happiness

- Open eyes
- Relaxed posture
- High head
- Wagging tail
- Mouth slightly open
- Seeks out touch / affection



2 Fear

- Stiff muscles
- Ears flat
- Head lowered
- White of eyes showing
- Body flat on the ground / backed against a wall
- Lifted paw

3 Anxiety

- Avoiding eye contact
- Constant lip licking
- Tail tucked between legs
- Shivers
- Panting



4 Aggression

- Holds eye contact
- Raised hackles
- Wrinkled nose
- Bared teeth
- Tail raised and straight
- Stiff legs or crouched down

Of course, every situation will be unique. Just because a dog's behavior checks one or two of the boxes listed above doesn't necessarily mean they are 100% happy, fearful, anxious, or aggressive. Dogs use their whole bodies to communicate. Therefore, we must pay attention to the whole dog, the surrounding environment, and their history before making a final judgement regarding what they are trying to say.

This will help you become a pro at knowing how dogs communicate!

How Smart is a dog really?

Dr. Sophia Curtis

Dogs have been known to learn hundreds of words, guess what other dogs and people are thinking, and do arithmetic. Many dog owners are aware of this and more thanks to the increasing numbers of scientists in the country who have knuckled down to the rapidly growing field of dog cognition. Research has it that a dog's intelligence is similar to that of a 2.5-year-old human child. Scientists have also proven that dogs can display jealousy, show emotional connection to their owners, and read our cues. The brightest dogs are even capable of learning a lot of words.

Dogs are adept to reading people

Dogs may be slobbery, goofy and adorably silly but they are also a lot smarter than we think. It's not just that your dog can tell when you're being a jerk to other people (he does) or that he knows when to ignore your advice (though he knows that too). Scientists have explained that the ability to take someone else's perspective has mostly been considered a skill unique to humans, but recent research suggests that dogs have this ability too.

Dogs not only pay attention to our tone but also to words of our speech

Many dog owners assume that their dogs can only process the tone of their speech, but experiments by researchers have shown that their brains can process actual words too. In the human brain, the left hemisphere primarily processes language and the right hemisphere primarily processes tone and emotions. Sound that enters the left ear is directed to the right hemisphere while sound that enters the right ear is directed to the left hemisphere. Therefore, we humans disproportionately interpret tone with the left ear and interpret language using sound from our right ear. Dogs have the same bias. In fact, the voice areas in both dog brain and human brain are located in similar places.

Dogs are emotionally connected to their owners

Dogs have an impressive ability to read and respond to human emotional states. They act submissively in anticipation of human punishment (behaviors similar to guilt). Dogs exhibit long-term emotional states, prosocial behavior, emotional contagion, and jealous-like behavior in the face of unfair treatment. They are able to comprehend and respond appropriately to human emotions, which is why humans perceive them so favorably. In addition, a dog's sense of smell is much greater than that of humans. This gives them outstanding insights to their surroundings. For instance, a tracking dog can tell which direction someone is moving in from smelling just five of their foot prints.

The limits of dogs' intelligence

As mentioned earlier, a dog's mental ability is similar to that of a 2.5-year-old human child. The intelligence varies depending on the type of dog, and some of these differences are determined by the dog's breed. The three types of dog intelligence include; Adaptive, which is how well your dog learns from his environment to solve problems, instinctive intelligence (what the dog is bred to do), and working and obedience intelligence which is comparable with school learning.



Five ways to communicate with your dog

Dr. Sophia Curtis



Communication should be the main focus when training your dog because it is a marker of successful human-dog relationships and a key ingredient of dog obedience. Your dog can only be as good at listening as you have taught him to be. Being a good listener can make him indispensable as a playmate, companion, and protector. Your dog is likely to misbehave if he has not had obedience training, or if you haven't taught him to listen and respond to your commands because dogs follow cues such as pointing and human gazing, when they don't know where else to look or listen. Here are five ways you can use to communicate more effectively with your pooch.

✕ Use hand signals and body gestures

Try to pair verbal cues with body signal cues time and again, to better communicate with your dog. Dogs are good at noticing and reading body language because that is how they communicate with other dogs in social situations and in packs. All eleven types of human body language that we use to can help communicate with dogs too. You can teach your dog to understand and react to various physical signals. Dogs are open to all forms of communication considering the fact that they use every part of their bodies to communicate.



✕ Give cue words once

It is not ideal to repeat commands during a training session. Ensure to give cue words once instead, so that your dog will follow commands immediately after the first vocal cue. Avoid repeating cue words out of frustration during training sessions as it indicates to your canine friend that listening the first time is not compulsory.

✕ Use a consistent marker signal

When coupled with rewards, a marker signal offers positive reinforcement. This signal indicates when a dog has followed an order correctly and communicates to your dog that following commands leads to treats. A marker signal can be anything from a verbal "Yes" or "Yep" to indicate pleasure to the sound of a handheld dog training clicker. Unlike human voice, Clicker training offers consistency because clickers don't change volume or tone.

✕ Show your dog how to behave

One way to avoid bad behavior is to interrupt your dog with a "NO" and give him a time-out. See to it that you help your dog succeed by showing him how to behave before he has a chance to show unpleasant behavior. If your pooch has a habit of counter surfing, it is best to give him a place in the kitchen to rest. Reward him with praise and treats if he complies.

✕ Speak less

The more you rephrase words or talk to your dog, the more you confuse him. Simply say a vocal cue once instead, then help him by luring. You need to understand that your dog tunes out the majority of what you say. Most talking is done between people. These vocalizations are likely ignored because they have nothing to do with dogs. Therefore, you need to be clear.

How dogs work

By Dr. Sophia Curtis

How well do we really know dogs? People may enjoy thinking about them as "man's best friend", but what actually drives the things they do? What is going on in their fur-covered heads as they look at us with their big, expressive eyes?

Pavlov's Dog Psychology - Classical Conditioning

You may have heard of this school of psychological theory being referenced widely as the "Pavlov's dogs experiment." But, if your Psych 101 memory fails you, this was a series of studies conducted starting in the mid to late 1800s by Ivan Pavlov.

Pavlov was the first researcher to demonstrate that dogs can be conditioned to pair two completely unrelated events together in their mind, even subconsciously. By ringing a buzzer (or metronome) just before feeding the dogs every day, Pavlov "trained" the dogs to salivate at the sound of a buzzer. Even when food wasn't present! Since then, there have been endless repetitions and variations that support this psychological phenomenon. Indeed, it happens with many animals and humans in many different types of situations.

Pavlov's Influence

The style of learning is now called "classical conditioning" or "Pavlovian conditioning." The significance of Pavlov's dog psychology to our understanding of dog behavior in general is that it led animal behaviorists to ideas like:

Conditioning dogs to relax comfortably in their bed or crate by associating the space with calm experiences, delicious treats and fun toys.

Conditioning dogs to learn with the use of clickers and whistles by pairing these "marker" sounds with treats.

Once a dog has been conditioned to learn with the use of a "marker," trainers can capture and shape a wide range of unique behaviors and then pair them with a cue (or "command.")

Dogs that have behavioral problems such as traumatic fear or aggression can be somewhat "retrained". This is done using "counter-conditioning" which re-associates negative triggers with positive experiences/rewards.

But, if you're thinking that the way humans and animals learn is way more complex than that, you're not the only one. So, let's explore some other research to reveal deeper levels of dog psychology.



B.F. Skinner's Operant Conditioning & Positive Reinforcement

In the 1900s, B.F. Skinner decided to study dog behavior in a more complex way. So he set up a series of studies. The aim was to take our understanding of human and dog psychology to a whole different level. The results of Skinner's experiments revealed another way animals learn. It became known as "operant conditioning."

Operant conditioning is the concept that the behavior of an animal (or human) can be "trained" by applying positive or negative stimuli after specific behaviors. The idea is that if a reward always comes after a certain behavior, the animal will repeat that behavior to earn the reward. The opposite is also expected. If some punishment happens after a certain behavior, the animal will avoid the behavior to avoid the punishment.

Operant conditioning is applied to dog psychology in the following way. We know that in addition to instinctive and subconscious behavior, dogs also do things in order to earn/avoid reward or punishment.

Dog Play Decoded

By Dr. Vanessa Spano

Play serves an important role in the neurodevelopment of many species, dogs included. Play helps enhance cognition, coordination, and locomotor activity. "Object play" may have predatory components. "Social play" teaches dogs about social interactions. As "social play" involves multiple modes of communication, including visual, tactile, vocal, and olfactory, playing allows dogs to strengthen communication skills as well as provide an opportunity to learn from making mistakes.

Different dogs, however, may have different play styles. It is important to take into consideration what the specific dog was bred for, as that is a window into its genetics. For example, Australian Shepherds were bred for herding sheep. Beagles were bred for hunting hare. Labrador and Golden Retrievers were bred to retrieve game for hunters. These breeds are hardwired to perform a certain job, and this can be manifested in many aspects of their behavior, including their play styles. Naturally, if they are thwarted from carrying out these behaviors as dictated by their genetics, behavioral disorders can ensue. Behavior is a function of the environment. As pet owners, we are responsible for providing our dogs with an individualized environment that leaves them happy.

Sporting breeds, such as spaniels, retrievers, and pointers, were bred to retrieve game. Thus, their play styles often involve wrestling and chasing. At home, dogs within these breeds may enjoy playing fetch and engaging in nose-work and scent-work games. Occupational opportunities outside of the home these dogs may enjoy include supervised tracking, dock diving, and water work.

Herding breeds, such as cattle dogs, collies, and Corgis, were bred to control the movement of other animals. As such, they often exhibit behaviors such as stalking, nipping, and barking during social interactions. Dogs within these breeds may enjoy a variety of "dog sports" including agility, treibball, competitive herding, and flyball. At home, they may enjoy engaging with a frisbee and puzzle toys.

Sight hounds and scent hounds, such as Dachshunds, Beagles, and Greyhounds, were bred to trail and catch prey. These dogs are often seen following whatever scent their nose has caught, or chasing. At home, dogs within this breed may benefit from nose-work and scent-work games. Occupational opportunities outside of the home these dogs may enjoy include supervised lure coursing and tracking.

Terriers were bred to hunt vermin and chase game. Thus, they have a high prey drive. Homes should provide digging pits or sandboxes. Occupational opportunities outside of the home these dogs may benefit from include earthdog trials and treibball.

Working dogs, which include a variety of breeds like Boxers, Dobermans, Mastiffs, Huskies, and Rottweilers, were bred to guard, rescue, and sled. These dogs were bred to be protective, and as such are not meant for families with a lot of foot traffic. They generally have a lot of energy, and when paired with their size, are more ideal for seasoned dog owners. Appropriate outlets for this energy including supervised jogging and hiking. They may also enjoy mental stimulation in the form of puzzle toys and obedience training using positive reinforcement.



Ways to socialize your new dog/puppy

By Dr. Sophia Curtis

Socializing your dog or pup means teaching him to be mannerly around people and other animals. Socialization keeps your dog confident in new situations and helps him be comfortable in new environments. The best age for puppy socialization is between three and twelve weeks old. If he is exposed to new places, people, sounds, dogs, and more, he is unlikely to be afraid of those things when he grows old. Veterinarians advise that dog owners should not allow their puppies around other dogs or places where sick dogs might have been until when they are 16 weeks old, when vaccinations are completed. But you don't want to avoid all other dogs; make sure to socialize him selectively.

How do you socialize your new dog/ puppy?

There are several methods of socialization; in puppy playdates (if he is a puppy), in classes, or at home. Socializing your new dog or puppy also needs more than meeting new dogs and people. He needs to be exposed to new textures, sights, and sounds. Letting children play with your dog or pup in a controlled setting, and getting different people to play with him is also helpful.

Furthermore, a healthy and coherent adult female dog with puppies is perfect for socializing your new puppy. The pup will be obnoxious and the adult female dog will allow this up to a point. Then she will eventually put him in his place. He then learns to cut it out and respect other dogs' boundaries. You can also look for a puppy socialization class, especially if you are unable to set up this type of meet.

Many modern trainers allow puppies who have two or three vaccinations into class because they understand the significance of early socialization. Look for a well-run class that is small enough so that your dog can receive personal attention.

Avoid taking your dog or pup to dog parks because dog parks are completely unsupervised and open to every dog. Therefore, there is a chance of him contracting diseases either from other dogs or drinking water. It only takes one bad experience for your pup to develop a lifetime reactivity issue towards other dogs. See to it that you introduce your puppy to new people as well. You might be tempted to show him off to your friends and take him everywhere but don't overwhelm him.

Allow children who are calm around dogs to meet your puppy, but make sure to explain to them what they should and what they shouldn't do. They should let the pup come to them instead of approaching him, and then hold a fist down toward his chest to let him sniff their hand. The children can then pet him gently if he seems like he wants to interact. Ensure you introduce your dog to a variety of adults and kids as well. Lastly, see to it that you get your pup out while avoiding places that are congested with other dogs. Your puppy or new dog should get accustomed to planes flying in the sky, bicycles, trucks, cars, and other things that he might come across in your area.



How to meet other dog lovers

By Aubrey Warren

Dogs are a perfect way to meet new people; people that love pets tend to associate readily, and having a common passion for dogs allows for easy discussion. Dog owners require other dog owners in the same way as dogs require one another. It's only reasonable that you'd want to interact with other individuals in your neighborhood who share your passion for dogs. This article will provide you with advice on how to meet other dog owners in order to form friendships and connections.

On a dog-friendly vacation or a vacation with dog activities

More establishments seem to have become dog-friendly, with some particularly oriented toward creating fun activities for both you and your dog. These occasions provide an excellent opportunity to form social connections with like-minded canine companions, and you may find yourself returning season after season.

Getting involved in a local dog community is a terrific opportunity to meet new people.

Spending quality time with your dog and joining dating platforms are great ways to meet new people, but entering a local dog group is also an excellent way to meet new people. Joining different gatherings will encourage you to interact with people who will initially be strangers but may become your friends afterward. Not only will you make new acquaintances, but your dog will have a wonderful time socializing with other dogs. So, if you're not already a member of a local dog community, get involved now by joining a dog dating platform. In no time, you and your dog will be going on a lot of dates.

Advice and information on pet-friendly social media sites and forums

Online communities can be a fantastic way to talk about dog issues or simply share your passion for dogs. There are even dog-specific dating platforms to ensure that your next relationship will include a common love of dogs. These dog dating platforms can allow you to connect with dog owners in your community, even if you're not searching for love and want to hang out with other dog owners or find companions for your dog.

There are also plenty of dog owner dating platforms that match dog lovers exclusively:

≡Tindog≡

Tindog is similar to Tinder in that it allows you to swipe left or right on potential dates. Tindog also features a built-in feature that suggests dog-friendly locations, such as parks and restaurants, where you may meet up.

≡Fetch a Date≡

This site will undoubtedly match you with the ideal dog owner. Not only will you be able to meet other dog lovers, but there will also be forums for dog-related conversation where you can ask a lot of questions.

≡Dig≡

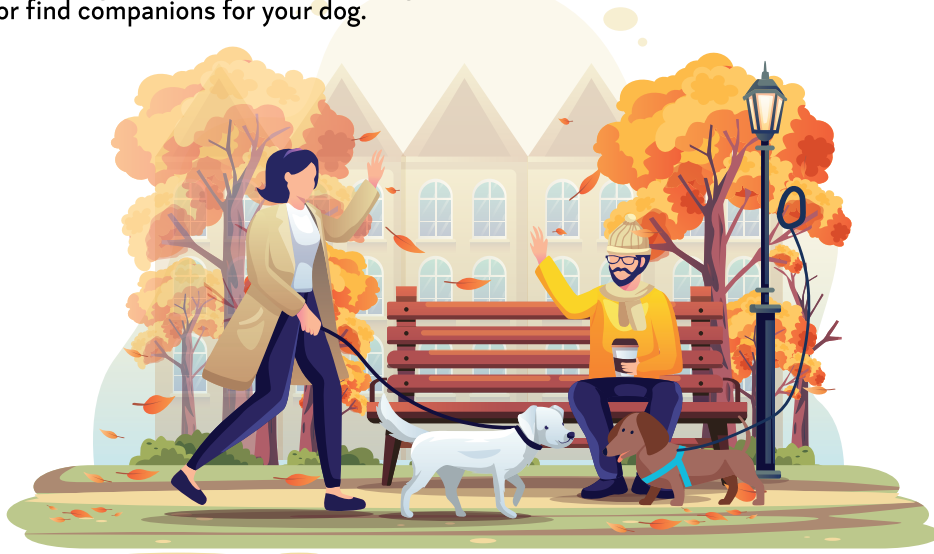
Dig is a common dog-loving dating platform that connects local dog owners and provides a variety of pet-friendly dating hangout choices. You can build a profile with this Smartphone app. The software then looks for people who share similar hobbies.

≡Dog Date Afternoon≡

Dog Date Afternoon creates profiles for both you and your dog so that people may learn more about you. Are you searching for a new adventure with a particular breed of dog? This website allows you to find the perfect match for your Dog.

Final Thoughts

Meeting fellow dog lovers in a park is undoubtedly the most obvious. When taking your dog to a park, whether it's a dog park or a normal park, you're bound to meet other dog owners, and it's simple to fall into a discussion as your dog meets and greets them. You could go to the neighborhood dog park and talk to other dog owners. Alternatively, you can use one of the Top Dog Dating Apps.



FUN DOG-FRIENDLY DATES



Pets are a significant part of a pet owner's life, and sometimes, we want to make sure a potential love prospect will not only adore us but will love our dog too. We have put together a list of dog-friendly dates that you can take your partner to, or you can keep just for you and your lovely dog. Let's look at these dog-friendly date ideas.

Outdoor Site Seeing

Travel a few hours and see a new location, or be a tourist in your own city. No matter where you reside, there are plenty of fascinating outdoor attractions to visit. There are a lot of places the two of you may visit, including classic buildings and beautiful greenery, where you can also bring your dog. Just be careful where the dog puts his leg: peeing in a public place is not a good idea.

Visit the Dog Park

When meeting someone new, it's sometimes preferable to be in a familiar setting. Your dogs will enjoy it since they will be allowed to wander the park, make new dog pals, and roll in stuff that you may not like.

The dog park, on the other hand, is a location where your dogs can always be themselves, which will also likely cause you and your date to loosen up, which is always a good thing when looking for a partner.

Before you go, make absolutely sure you have your ticket; your dog will enjoy sniffing all the new scents; bring lots of water for both you and your dog to stay hydrated.

Take a Picnic

If you have a well-behaved dog, picnics are also great options. Picnics are the type of occasion that should make your dog happy while also providing a standard to have a good date. Picnics are ideal for first dates or for people who have already been out on a first date.

Dates for Shopping

Pet stores are enjoyable for both pets and their owners since they provide treats for our dog friends as well as new and exciting pets to observe and engage with, such as puppies and kittens.

It's a neutral setting, and while having a date at a store may seem unusual at first, the dating environment is constantly evolving. It's not easy to come up with innovative and interesting suggestions that aren't stressful or time-consuming.

Bars and Restaurants That Are Dog-Friendly

A growing number of venues are allowing dogs provided they are leashed and well behaved. Some establishments only let dogs outdoors, while some have completely opened their doors. Before presuming you can take your dog, confirm with the place beforehand. It would be humiliating to be forced to turn around and return home.

When you've found a suitable location, you and your date may arrange to meet with your dogs and enjoy a night out like any other couple, only you and your dogs are better off since you made sure they could accompany you. To assist, keep some decent dog snacks available.

Final Thoughts

It would be useful to have several date ideas where you can take your pets. It is entirely possible to enjoy a wonderful date while accompanied by your dog. Just make absolutely sure your date is okay with your pet companion accompanying you. If your dog is a significant part of your life, taking them out on a date with you is a fantastic way to see if this potential partner is animal-friendly.

How dogs learn

By Dr. Sophie Curtis

Dogs can learn from humans through a process referred to as conditioning. They can also learn from other dogs through social learning. Several psychologists, including Skinner and Pavlov, have done a lot of experiments on animals, including dogs, in the area of behavioral conditioning. All behavioral conditioning methods that we use to train dogs are based on their extensive work and studies. Our canine friends respond to classical and operant conditioning. This is to say, classical conditioning is responsible for involuntary responses such as, your dog salivating when dinner is served. On the other hand, operant conditioning is responsible for voluntary responses such as, your dog sitting for a treat.

Classical conditioning is useful in giving positive associations to potentially negative objects e.g harness, muzzle, nail clippers/ grinder. For instance, if you show your dog a muzzle before the start of dinner every night, they will start to associate a muzzle with dinner. Since he gets dinner whenever he sees a muzzle, your dog may start to salivate whenever he sees the muzzle because food is likely on the way.

There are two classes of techniques for shaping a dog's voluntary behavior, based on operant conditioning. These two classes include aversive dog training (negative reinforcement, positive punishment), and reward dog training (positive reinforcement, negative punishment). Operant dog techniques are mostly used by dog owners to train their dogs to do tricks and commands, and to stop dog bad behavior.



How Dogs Learn - Operant Conditioning.

Based on operant conditioning principles, a dog's behavior can be changed by adding or taking away an aversive stimulus. Their behavior can also be changed by adding or taking away a reward stimulus. An aversive stimulus can be a finger jab, a collar correction, a slap on the muzzle, an unpleasant sound, an electric shock, and much more. Similarly, a reward stimulus can be a variety of things including play, toys, walks, and freedom to roam. It can even be food, and much more.

Different stimuli have different result on learning depending on the type of dog, the temperament of the dog, the temperament of the trainer, the environment, how the stimuli is applied, and the trigger event, among other factors. Some dogs are food focused which means that food will be effective at training good behaviors and stopping bad behaviors. Similarly, some dogs will wilt with just a stern word, while others will turn around and bite when jabbed by a foot or a finger.

What and how your dog learns is highly dependent on timing (when a stimulus is applied), and frequency (how often a stimulus is applied). Generally, we can apply aversive stimulus or reward stimulus as close to the target as possible. According to Operant conditioning studies, dog owners should not over correct their dogs. If an aversive stimulus is applied too often, dogs will get used to it and it will no longer be effective. Likewise, dog owners should not reward their dogs too frequently because he/ she may learn to expect a reward every time, and not be motivated to give his best effort.

What is the BOND® behavior modification training plan?



The BOND behavior modification plan consists of four easy steps that can help your dog build confidence and gain a sense of security when alone.

B

▶ **Be positive.** Focus on positive behaviors that are critical to the success of behavior modification by rewarding your dog with a tummy rub, tasty treat or a toy when he exhibits calm and relaxed responses.

O

▶ **Only reward calm behavior.** Encourage calm behavior by ignoring your dog's overly excited, attention-seeking activities. Look for opportunities to spend positive, relaxed time with your dog, like taking a neighborhood walk.

N

▶ **No more drama when you come and go.** Much of your dog's anxiety-driven behavior may be a result of stress when you come and go from the house. Grabbing your belongings can be a cue that creates anxiety. There are several activities you can use to alleviate the drama upon your departure and return.

D

▶ **Develop your dog's independence.** Help your dog develop independence by rewarding him with a treat or attention only when he is relaxed. You can also provide a safe place, such as a small rug, to teach him to stay for increasing periods of time and at an increasing distance from you.



"BOND is a registered trademark of Pegasus Laboratories, Inc."

10 Ways to Puppy Proof Your Home

By Jen Boon

Before you get a new dog, you'll want to puppy-proof certain areas of your home to keep them safe. Just like curious kids, puppies have a tendency to get into things that can be unsafe or unhealthy for them, whether it's chewing on your shoes or getting tangled up in electrical cords. Before you bring a new puppy home, it's important to "puppy proof" the areas of your house where the puppy will spend their time. This will ensure your new dog is safe and happy, even when you're not around to supervise.

Block Off No-Go Zones

If there are areas of your home you don't want your puppy to go, it's worth investing in gates to block them off. Products like this Step-Through Pet Gate adjust to fit different doors. It also includes a handle that lets you pass through easily while preventing curious pups from getting into mischief.

Elevate Your Plants

Puppies will often chew on anything within their reach, so it's a good idea to pick up plants that are on the floor and move them to a higher place. Ingesting pieces of any plant can upset your pup's stomach, and there are a number of common houseplants that are actually toxic to pets. For more information, the ASPCA has a comprehensive list of plants that are toxic to dogs.

Put Away Bags and Shoes

Having a puppy is all fun and games until you come home to find they've ripped apart your favorite pair of shoes! In all seriousness, everyone in your household should get into the habit of putting away shoes and bags in secure locations. Not only can ingesting foreign material be harmful for pets, but purses often contain medication, gum and other substances that are toxic to your dog.

Invest in a Crate or Pen

You can't monitor your puppy all the time but you can keep them safe when they're unsupervised with the help of a crate or play pen. Many trainers recommend using a dog crate at night and when you're at work. However, if you want your pup to have more space to play, a play pen gives them room to walk around while still keeping them out of trouble.

Clean Up the Floor

When was the last time you cleaned under your sofa or bed? Puppies love to investigate these tight spaces, and if there are stray objects like coins or paper clips lying around your dog could potentially ingest them and choke. So, while it may not be a fun chore, it's important to deep-clean your floors before you bring home a new dog.

Hide or Cover Electrical Cords

The last thing you need is for your new puppy to chew on an electrical cord, potentially hurting themselves and damaging your electronics. My cat used to do this when he was a kitten, so any cords I couldn't remove or hide I covered with inexpensive split tubing to deter his antics.

Keep Trash Covered

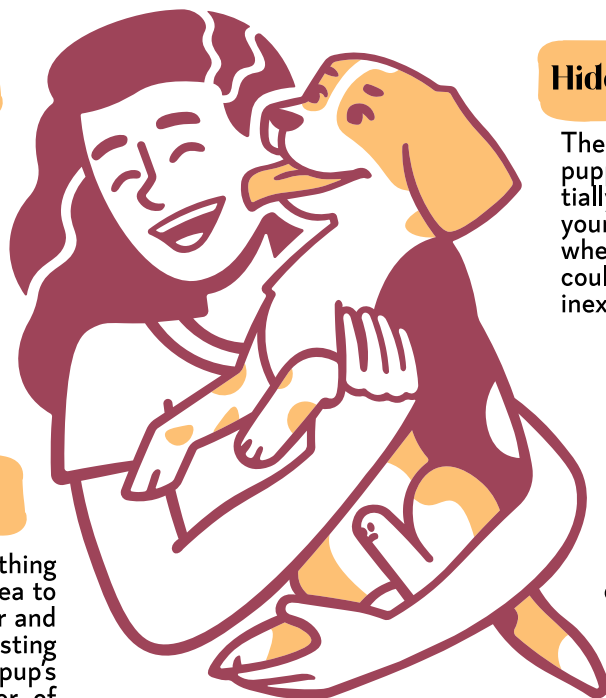
The last thing you need is for your new puppy to chew on an electrical cord, potentially hurting themselves and damaging your electronics. My cat used to do this when he was a kitten, so any cords I couldn't remove or hide I covered with inexpensive split tubing to deter his antics.

Put Cleaning Supplies Up High

Many households store cleaning supplies under the kitchen or bathroom sink, but these spots are easily accessible to curious pups. If possible, relocate your cleaning supplies containing harmful chemicals to a higher spot that pets can't reach. If there isn't another storage spot, you may want to purchase some cabinet locks to keep your puppy out.

Secure Doors and Windows

By the time my puppy was six months old, she had figured out how to open lever-style door handles. One time she actually let herself out of the house! Puppies can be quite clever, so it's a good idea to properly secure doors and windows in your home. You can use door lever locks, hook-and-eye latches and other baby-proofing products to help keep your puppy safe.

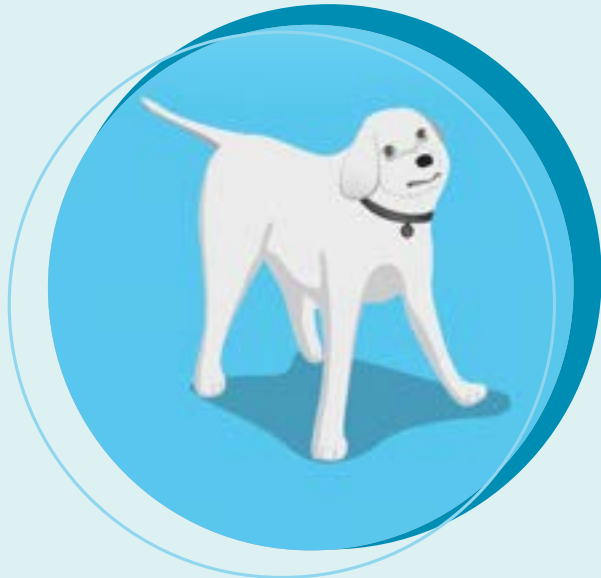


7 Decoding dog body language

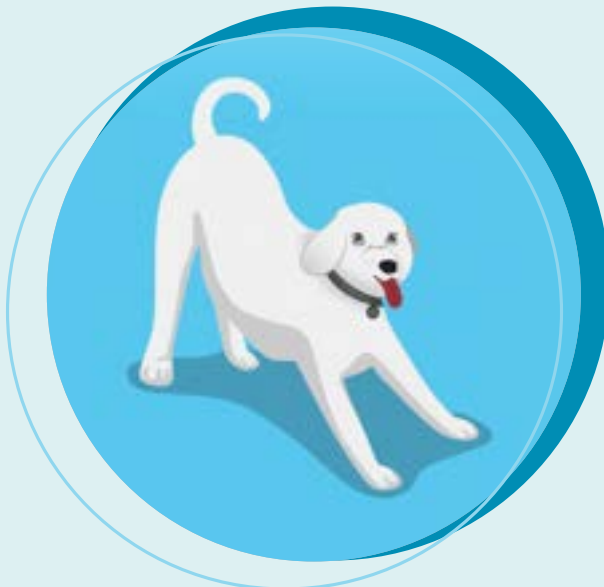
Since dogs are incapable of speech, they depend on non-verbal cues or body language to communicate with others. That could be the tilt of the head, the wiggle of the body, or the perking of the ears. Each movement means something in dog language.



This dog is possibly scared. This dog's tail is down and he's not making direct eye contact. Best not to approach this dog.



This dog is angry and should not be approached. He is showing his teeth and has a tense posture.



This dog wants to play. The mouth is open showing his tongue, his tail is up, and he is in a playful stance.

2 Train your dog to sit



1. Get your dog's full attention



2. Show her a treat and let her smell her reward



3. Say sit while you bring the treat higher and eventually she will sit down to see it



4. As soon as she sits, give her the treat and also pet her and tell her that she did good.

3 Teach your dog that "No" means No.



1. Show your dog your treat in your hand



2. When she tries to grab it, close your hand and say no



3. Open your hand again and if she approaches it, close your fist and say no



4. Continue until your dog doesn't go after the treat without your permission. Reward her when she does what you ask.

The ABC's of potty training

By Dr. Amy Pike

Always have your eye on your puppy. Most potty-training accidents are preventable by watching your puppy and taking it outside to the desired elimination location frequently during the day, especially upon waking and 10 to 15 minutes after eating and drinking. If you are unable to closely watch your puppy, place it in its crate or safe place (see below). You can also tether your puppy to you with a leash so it is unable to wander off on its own and eliminate unseen.

Reward good Behavior. Whenever the puppy eliminates appropriately outside, use high-pitched praise and treats to reward the desired elimination behavior. This will help your puppy learn the right time and place to eliminate. If you happen to catch your puppy in the act of indoor elimination, quietly pick him up and quickly whisk him outside to finish elimination in the desired spot. Reward the puppy with praise and treats if they perform as desired. Never use punishment, such as rubbing the puppy's nose in it or spanking, when the puppy has eliminated inside the house. If you find the elimination after the fact, the puppy is not able to associate the current punishment with the previously performed act of elimination. Also, punishment may lead to fear or anxiety associated with your presence, your hand or the rolled-up newspaper. Clean any spots indoors with an enzymatic cleaner designed for pet urine and feces.

Use a Command. Having a command for elimination ("Go potty" or "Do your business") helps the puppy learn what to do and where to do it. Once the command is learned and consistent, you can have elimination under verbal control and ensure it is performed before having to leave the dog for a length of time. As the puppy eliminates outside, say the chosen command repeatedly and then praise the puppy using the command (e.g. "Good go potty"). Eventually your puppy will associate the command with the process of elimination as well as the desired location.



Confinement Training

All puppies should have a safe, secure place where they can relax, stay in while you are away from the house or unable to watch them, and sleep. Start by picking out a secure room or type of crate. Select a crate that will accommodate the full adult size of your dog rather than buying different sizes as it grows. In a crate, your dog only needs enough room to stand up, sit, turn around and lie down, so as the puppy grows you will need to block off the excess area using cardboard boxes or plastic bins.

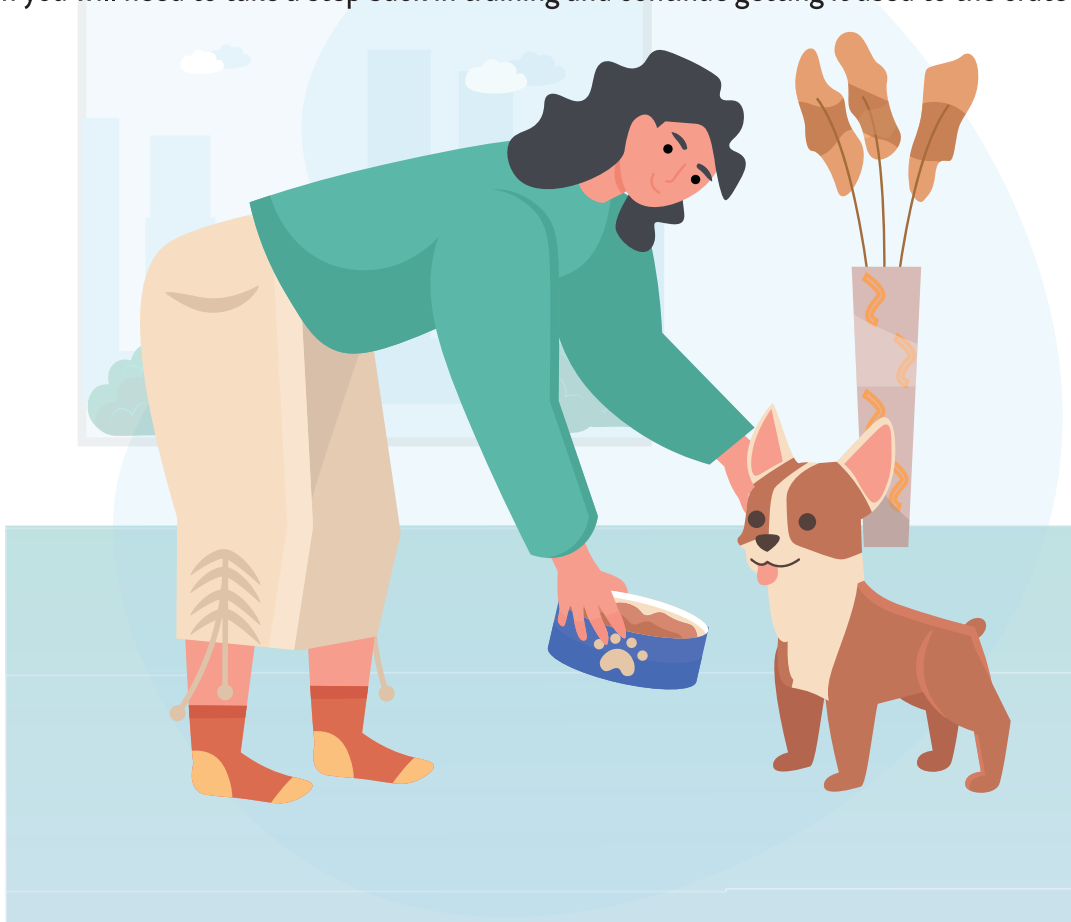
A small puppy can only hold its bladder and bowels for three to four hours at a time. If you plan to be gone for a longer time period, your confinement area will need to include both sleeping and elimination locations. Next, choose a good location for the confinement. Most dogs will want to be where the family is the majority of the time, so in a living area or kitchen is best. Avoid putting the kennel in an isolated area of the house, such as a basement or noisy and humid laundry room.

The next step is to get the puppy used to being confined. Start by having the crate out and allowing the puppy to explore. Reward any exploration of the crate with a food reward and praise. You can also throw a favorite treat or toy in the crate and allow him to retrieve it without having the door shut.

Tips



First-time introductions with the crate door closed should only last a few minutes at a time. Time the first introduction after a long play period, when the puppy has had food and water and a chance to eliminate. By doing this, your puppy can appreciate the crate for what it is—a nice place to relax and have a nap! Place a few treats, toys or food in the crate to motivate the puppy to enter voluntarily, close the door and leave the room. Remain close enough to hear your puppy. Expect some degree of distress the first few times. However, never reward the puppy by letting it out when it cries or whines. Ignore the puppy until the crying stops, even if only briefly, then release it. If your puppy is crying loudly and is very agitated, then you will need to take a step back in training and continue getting it used to the crate without being confined.



Understanding house soiling

By Dr. Sally Foote

One of the first and most important training skills for dogs is to learn to eliminate in an appropriate area. Most pet parents want their dog to go outside or on a potty pad in the home. Dogs want to put their stool or urine in one spot, away from the sleeping and living area.

At any point in a dog's life, they may urinate or defecate in the home, commonly known as house soiling. If a dog is well trained, any lapse is due to a physical problem. Contact your veterinarian immediately. Some dogs have difficulty learning to go in the designated area resulting in frustration and surrender of the pet.

Here are the most common reasons why dogs house soil.

The surface that a puppy eliminates upon, becomes their preference. Regularly taking a dog out on grass, or a potty pad will identify this as a toilet area. Avoid the chance of an accident, otherwise the dog will gain a preference for the spot you do not want. Confinement for short periods is the best way to avoid accidents.

Treatment for house soiling starts with a stool or urine test to screen for health problems. These tests will determine if an intestinal or urinary problem is present. Treat all health issues as part of a training plan. Be sure to review the diet, and water intake with your veterinarian as part of treatment.



5 Steps Potty Primer

By Dr. Sally Foote

The five-step potty primer is a treatment and prevention program for house soiling. When every family member follows this plan, pups can improve within a week. If family members skip steps, your pup will take longer to train.

Potty Primer

1

Feed your dog twice a day, using the same amount and type of food. Dogs need to defecate within 20 minutes of eating, so scheduled feeding equals scheduled elimination.

2

Use a leash to take your dog out, even with a fenced-in yard. Your dog anticipates going out, stimulating the bowel and bladder for elimination.

3

Give rewards outside, not inside. Upon finishing elimination, give a tidbit of a treat within one second. Treats need to follow a behavior within one second for the dog to learn that was the right behavior. When a dog gets the reward inside, they learn they should hurry up to come inside – leading to accidents.

4

Take your dog on a walk. Many dogs want to defecate away from their yard. Walking and sniffing stimulates urination and defecation.

5

If your dog has not eliminated after ten minutes outside on leash, come inside, and confine the dog to the room you are in. After a few minutes take your dog outside repeating steps one to four. Repeat this procedure until the dog eliminates.

These five steps provide consistent rituals and routines helping your dog quickly learn the right place to go. I have had many adult dogs become trained when pet parents follow these five steps. If you continue to have problems, be sure to schedule an exam with your veterinarian.

Understanding destructive behavior

By Dr. Sally Foote



Chewing furniture, digging holes, or tearing off door trim are frustrating behaviors for pet parents and may injure our dogs. Often veterinarians do not hear about these problems until they are severe. Dogs often break their teeth and/or cause severe damage to the home, breaking the human animal bond. Let's look at the common causes of destructive behavior, and how to treat or prevent these problems.

The three common causes for destructive behaviors are frustration, anxiety, and boredom. Each one of these primary causes may reflect in the same pattern of destruction. It is important to understand how these three causes build, how to treat and finally prevent them. Frustration builds when an animal cannot perform a desired behavior. A dog barking at a bicyclist through the fence leads to jumping up, pulling the fence slats off. The desire to chase is the desired behavior and the fence blocks the ability to do so. Calling the dog away from the fence before the frustration builds and switching to a game of fetch provides an outlet for chase, reducing frustration. If your dog is getting over stimulated, it is often rooted in frustration. Think of outlets for the behavior they want to do.

Anxiety to noise, separation or confinement builds to panic. Panic leads to escape behaviors of digging at a door, pulling at door trim, or breaking out of a crate. Typical anxiety signs are pacing, panting, whining, and drooling. Anxiety problems often need medication, such as fluoxetine, or supplements to keep the mind calm during training. If your dog shows these signs, be sure to tell your veterinarian. Early intervention is best. Prevent anxiety by socializing your dog to noise, crates and leaving them alone.

Boredom is the great pretender. Dogs will chew up furniture, mouth door handles, and get into the garbage, mimicking separation anxiety. How can you tell the difference? Note whether there are any signs of anxiety such as destruction around doorways or windows. Did you see any drooling or elimination? That is often associated with anxiety.

Video recording your dog is the best way to see if there are anxiety signs or simple investigating behaviors. The best ways to beat boredom is to increase activity, engage the brain for problem solving, and teach manners.

Tips for curing boredom in your dog

By Dr. Sally Foote

To prevent boredom, frustration and create a calm mind to prevent anxiety, follow this daily plan:

1

Walk your adult dog for 1 minute and a puppy 3 minutes per pound of body weight divided daily. A tired dog is a well-behaved dog.

2

Get rid of the food bowl and use only food puzzles and training to earn the meal. Now you are working out the brain and the body.

3

Follow the "four on the floor" rule -petting, play and cuddles only when all four paws are on the floor. This prevents jumping up and encourages good manners.

If your dog continues to show destructive behaviors, contact a certified veterinary behavior consultant. I provide Telehealth consults to pet parents and collaborate with your veterinarian for medication, supplements, and any other health care need.



Understanding Anxiety in Dogs

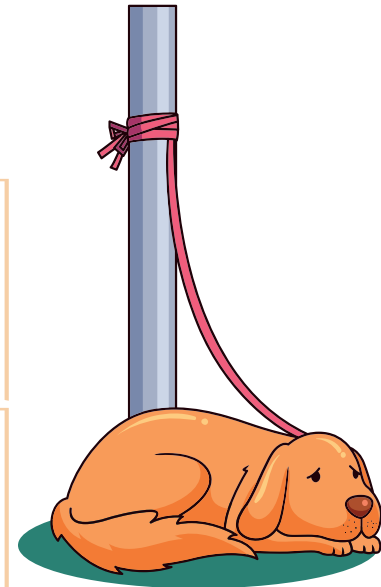
By Dr. Sally Foote



Just like people, dogs experience anxiety. While anxiety is a normal and healthy emotion that can affect all types of dogs, if the level of anxiety is high it can lead to an anxiety disorder. Early intervention can help prevent property damage or self-injury.

According to experts, dogs who feel panic at being left alone typically do so for three reasons:

- 1 Dogs with departure anxiety usually become anxious when they see their owner prepare to leave. Triggers for the dog may include putting on shoes or a jacket or grabbing keys. The dog learns that when this happens, their owner is leaving, and they will be alone. With this type of anxiety, the dog only experiences anxiety when the owner leaves, or when the owner returns. This is a milder form of separation anxiety, and remote control dispensing devices help with training.
- 2 Dogs with Confinement Anxiety are those who panic because they are confined to a small space. These dogs will sometimes injure themselves while trying to break out. The dogs are anxious about the crate door that is closed, or the baby gate keeping them out of an area. These dogs often whine or paw at any closed door in the home. Counter-conditioning these dogs to closed doors or avoiding confinement will help them be calm.
- 3 Separation anxiety is a condition in which affected dogs may exhibit certain problematic behaviors when left alone, such as when the owner leaves the home for work or to run an errand. Research has shown that separation anxiety affects up to 17% of dogs in the United States- and that statistic is probably much higher after the pandemic.



Let's dive into separation anxiety a little more.

Mild separation anxiety is often misinterpreted by pet parents as annoying, or cute behavior as the dog carries person items of a family member, leaving them in the dog bed or laying with them. Literally holding the scent of the missing person, provides a calming effect. Anxiety signs are subtle, as this "pack rat" behavior provides self-calming. With this mild type of anxiety, sometimes training alone or remote control dispensing devices can help. Moderate separation anxiety develops over time with pacing, panting, whining, and digging behaviors. Often these dogs began with mild signs described above, but the anxiety grew over time.

Severe Separation Anxiety – At this level, dogs rise quickly to panic and escape behaviors. Intense whining, barking, and digging begin as soon as the person walks out the door. Often, these dogs experienced a fearful event when alone. This association of intense fear with separation causes the panic response. Dogs will destroy doorways, thresholds, and escape from confinement in their panic to escape and find their bonded human.

Treatment for separation anxiety for moderate to severe cases include medications, like fluoxetine, combined with a training program. Fluoxetine is one of the two approved drugs for treating separation anxiety in dogs. This medication increases serotonin levels in the dog's brain, an important brain chemical that decreases anxiety. The medication slowly builds up the calming brain chemistry to create a daily sense of calm. Combined with a behavior modification plan, medications can help the dog cope.

Tips for dealing with separation anxiety

By Dr. Sally Foote



1. Video record your dog as you prepare to leave, depart, and return. From this recording you can see when your dog rises to anxiety and what stimulates that. In one study, 50% of dogs diagnosed with separation anxiety had noise fears or boredom causing destructive behaviors, not separation anxiety.

2. Talk to your veterinarian or a behavior specialist. Share the video with your veterinarian so she can make a correct diagnosis. Also, make and share a list of your dog's triggers. Be clear describing the panic your dog experiences and work together to create a plan. Since an anxious brain cannot learn, your veterinarian may recommend using medication to reduce anxiety and increase the effectiveness of the behavior plan.

3. Build independence daily. Daily independence games reduce hyper bonding, a root cause of separation anxiety. Make leaving a more enjoyable event for your dog by tossing treats on the floor away from you as you leave. As your dog turns to find the food, you walk away. Now your dog associates good things with you leaving.

4. Keep your dog mentally and physically active -Walk your dog at least once a day. Switch the routes and provide time to sniff all the smells of the world. A balance of walking and sniffing engages the brain and body, releasing naturally occurring calming brain chemistry.

5. Spread the bond – Involve others in the care and keeping of your dog. This allows your dog to bond with multiple people, decreasing the risk for developing separation anxiety. Assign friends or family members to play with your pet or take them on walks.

Treating separation anxiety requires patience, routine and communication with your veterinarian and behaviorist as your dog learns to be independent.



Understanding fear in your dog

By Dr. Sally Foote

Fear is displayed as avoidance of a perceived threat. Fear may be learned from experience or developed according to the health and age of the dog. Fear is a normal response to a perceived threat.

Puppies are born without fear, and learn to explore, accept noises, touch, and other stimuli easily until twelve weeks of age. At twelve weeks, the fear area of the brain develops, to protect the puppy from harm. By sixteen weeks of age, puppies startle easily, and are timid around new experiences. This fear is useful to protect them from harm.

Socialization is easy when the puppy is young, as there is little fear. Rewards paired with new experiences teaches the puppy to like the new stimuli. Lack of socialization increases fears, and they grow as the puppy ages. Socialization is safe and important for all puppies before four months of age.

Biochemical changes occur in the brain when fear rises. Adrenalin and other stress hormones rise, to activate the body to move away, run or hide. When the threat passes, the dog's fear will decrease and relax as adrenalin decreases. If the threat continues, adrenaline continues to build, causing panic or aggression. If the perceived threat is present on a regular basis, the dog may develop a chronic state of fear. The dog cannot get away or relax and chronic anxiety develops.

Understanding the early signs of fear is important to help our dogs. When a dog begins to show fear, adding a reward around the threat can change the experience from fear to fun. This is called counter-conditioning. When the dog's fear rises above a critical level, appetite, and play shut down. In this state the dog cannot counter-condition. Counter-conditioning requires a brain calm enough to experience the reward.

There are three elements to decrease a dog's fears.

- 1** Have a brain calm enough to take food, a toy or other reward. When a dog refuses the treat, fear is shutting the brain off.
- 2** Know what triggers your dog fears and eliminate what you can, then work to counter-condition the remaining triggers.
- 3** Recognize the fear early and immediately add a reward around the threat, without advancing the threat. As fear subsides, allow the threat to come slightly closer or more intensely, continuing to reward. At any point that the reward is refused, increase the distance from the threat.

If your dog cannot calm enough to take any reward, contact your veterinarian. Medication, supplements, or other therapies are needed to provide mental calming. There are many safe and effective products that enable your dog to counter-condition to fears. As the fears subside, many dogs are weaned off medications and may only need them for highly stressful situations.



Understanding dog aggression

By Dr. Sally Foote

Aggression is a normal dog behavior, to create a distance between a dog and a perceived threat. Therefore growls, nips and bites happen in one situation but not another. It is all about what the dog perceives in that moment.

Dogs learn to understand each other's signals for friendliness or aggression as young puppies. The mother dog will growl at the puppies who play too rough. This warns them to stop, or she will nip at them. When the puppies stop, she grooms them as a reward for calming down. Socializing a puppy is important to build acceptance of new experiences. Lack of socialization increases fear. The young dog will switch over to staring, growls, and nips to say, "stay away."

Over time, the dog will skip over the signs of fear when they repeatedly sense a threat. The dog will quickly switch to avoiding staring, growls, or nips because avoidance did not help. If the early signs of aggression are not heeded, the dog will bite. Therefore, a dog who growled at the grandkids will eventually bite the grandkids who keep reaching and grabbing at the dog.

The more intense the perception of a threat, the more intense the aggression. This perception is controlled by the emotional and physical state of the dog at any age. When a dog must bite to stop a threat, they have learned that biting controls the threat. Therefore, the dog is more likely to bite in that situation.

Pain changes brain chemistry as the body is trying to protect itself. The rise of stress hormones can increase anxiety and the perception of threat. The sweetest dog may growl or bite when they are in pain. It is normal for an animal with inflamed ears or sore joints to show aggression. If your older dog is acting "grouchy," pain is often present.

Genetic development of the brain can alter perception. The brain often lacks the ability to process stimuli, often resulting in a chronic state of anxiety, leading to aggression.

To prevent aggression, start by follow these simple rules:

1. When a dog starts to stare – look at what the dog is looking at. This is the threat.
2. Call the dog away from the threat and reward or have the threat leave while tossing a reward to the dog. This makes it positive for the dog to not escalate to growl or bite as the threat leaves.
3. Note all the situations that cause aggression and avoid them.

Treating aggression requires a plan specific for your dog, with the guidance of your veterinarian and a certified behaviorist. Medications help to decrease underlying anxiety or pain, and work best when combined with a positive behavior plan. Managing the threats through avoidance will always be part of a plan, as a dog never forgets the power of a bite.



Can noises cause anxiety in dogs?

By Dr. Sally Foote



Can noises cause anxiety in dogs? The answer may surprise you

Researchers at the University of California, Davis, have found that people may not recognize that their dog is stressed when exposed to common household noises. While it's well-established that sudden loud noises, such as fireworks or thunderstorms, commonly trigger a dog's anxiety, a new study finds even common noises, such as a vacuum or microwave can be a trigger. The study was published in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*.

The research found that high-frequency, intermittent noises such as the battery warning of a smoke detector are more likely to cause a dog anxiety, rather than low-frequency, continuous noise.

"We know that there are a lot of dogs that have noise sensitivities, but we underestimate their fearfulness to noise we consider normal because many dog owners can't read body language," said lead author Emma Grigg, a research associate and lecturer at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine.

Signs of anxiety

Some common signs of a dog's anxiety include cringing, trembling, or retreating, but owners may be less able to identify signs of fear or anxiety when behaviors are more subtle. For example, stressed dogs could pant, lick their lips, turn their head away or even stiffen their body. Sometimes their ears will turn back, and their head will lower below their shoulders. Grigg suggests owners better educate themselves on anxiety-related behavior.

Researchers conducted a survey of 386 dog owners about their dogs' responses to household sounds and examined recorded dog behaviors and human reactions from 62 videos available online. The study found that owners not only underestimated their dogs' fearfulness, but the majority of people in videos responded with amusement rather than concern over their dog's welfare. "There is a mismatch between owners' perceptions of the fearfulness and the amount of fearful behavior actually present. Some react with amusement rather than concern," Grigg said. "We hope this study gets people to think about the sources of sound that might be causing their dog stress, so they can take steps to minimize their dog's exposure to it."



Some sounds painful for dogs

Grigg said because dogs have a wider range of hearing, some noises could also be potentially painful to a dog's ears, such as very loud or high-frequency sounds. She said minimizing exposure may be as simple as changing batteries more frequently in smoke detectors or removing a dog from a room where loud noises might occur.

"Dogs use body language much more than vocalizing and we need to be aware of that," said Grigg. "We feed them, house them, love them and we have a caretaker obligation to respond better to their anxiety."

The Case of the Fraidy Pup

Dr. Vanessa Spano



Dogs can be afraid of all sorts of things: thunder, umbrellas, strangers knocking at the door, even a paper bag blowing through the wind is enough to send some dogs running!

While fear is an evolutionary trait (it keeps us safe, after all), it can also be debilitating. Dogs who are fearful require intervention techniques and ongoing support to ensure a good quality of life – which is what all pets deserve!

Such is the story of Duke, the “fraidy pup.”

Duke was a 2-year-old, male, castrated Miniature Australian Shepherd. Despite being so young, Duke’s early life was not easy. One year ago, he was adopted from a city shelter. Before that, he had been transported from another animal shelter in a rural town. Finally, after much chaos, disruption, and movement, Duke was lucky enough to be adopted by a lovely young couple. Now, he calls the city home.

But as anyone who has ever lived in a concrete jungle knows, city life can be LOUD.

Enter, Duke’s ongoing struggle with noise phobia.

Before we dive into this case study, a few key notes. When Duke arrived at Dr. Spano’s behavior clinic, his presenting complaints were that he frequently stopped on walks with occasional barking and lunging towards joggers and cyclists. His previous trainer tried to remedy the situation by asking his owners to distract him with treats during walks. However, this was a no-go for Duke. He refused to eat outdoors...not even delicious doggy snacks! As a result, one month prior to meeting with Dr. Spano, his primary-care veterinarian prescribed fluoxetine at its starting dosage once daily. After a few days of starting this medication, his appetite tanked.

By all accounts, Duke was loved and secure. Where was this fearful behavior coming from? To rule out medical reasons, Duke underwent a physical exam and comprehensive blood and urine testing, which were fortunately all normal!

Next, Dr. Spano did some history-taking with Duke’s owners. Duke’s owners shared that upon first adopting him about 1 year ago, he did not exhibit this stopping behavior on walks. Upon reviewing early video footage of Duke on walks with his owners, Dr. Spano pointed out some early warning signs of fear. For example, he walked with a tucked tail and flattened ears. In addition, during nighttime walks when it was quiet outside, Duke fixated on joggers and cyclists. His pupils would dilate, and suddenly, he would lunge.

Understandably, this behavior made walking Duke a challenge! It also guaranteed that walks would be unenjoyable for Duke, his owners, and any passerby who might feel threatened by a pouncing dog. To try to control Duke, his owners would hold him back with a tight leash.

Unfortunately, over the coming months, new behaviors evolved. Duke started to freeze and plant on walks. This was especially common during times of high traffic or in areas where there was busy construction overhead. Whenever his leash came out at home, he played “hard to get.” Duke actively avoided the leash and eventually started to hide underneath the table. Going on “walkies” became a nightmare for poor Duke.



Initially, his owners assumed perhaps their dog was simply being stubborn. Yet, Duke was also easily startled by loud and sudden noises, such as sirens, alarms, a hard object dropping onto the floor, etc. Terrified, he would run into the bathtub. He could tremble for upwards of an hour! Duke was not being stubborn! Dr. Vanessa Spano diagnosed poor Duke with noise phobia.

The tucked tail and flat ears were body language cues that supported this theory early on in his adoption. Because urban environments have loud noises, Duke likely developed a fear about going outdoors in his neighborhood. Based on his behavior, it was determined that he associated the leash with outside-time, and as a result, when the leash came out: he bolted in fear.

Living in a city means noise is unavoidable: so, how could the behavior clinic help Duke?

First, a tough conversation regarding his prognosis was had: while fear can be managed, likely Duke would always struggle with some degree of fear outside in the urban environment, and as a result, active management will be required for the remainder of his life in the city. Additionally, the lunging towards quick movements was likely secondary to his herding breed and that this could not be “trained out of him” completely. At this time, the owners revealed they were considering re-homing Duke. A quieter, more peaceful countryside home would no doubt improve his quality of life. Nevertheless, they weren’t ready to make this decision yet.

A comprehensive plan, involving management, training, and medications, were recommended. Duke’s fluoxetine dosage was decreased to determine if a temporary dose decrease would lead to improvement of his appetite. Additionally, because the intensity of Duke’s anxiety inhibited him from learning while outside, it was recommended to minimize his walks to offer him some relief and to avoid flooding him, which could potentially make his anxiety even more intense. This means that potty breaks were to be scheduled during less busy times when noise, cyclists, and joggers were at a minimum. Duke’s owners also purchased a body harness. A new trainer, under the recommendation of veterinary behaviorists, was hired to help the owners start to desensitize, or acclimate, Duke to a new body harness indoors only without using it outside first. And above all, they kept him on a tight leash.

Indoors, Duke’s home was equipped with the best doggy-anxiety technology. A white noise machine and door and window sealants were to buffer scary sounds and keep his baseline anxiety at a minimum.

The inside tactics helped Duke relax more at-home! But after two weeks on a lower fluoxetine dosage, Duke’s owners reported that, while his appetite improved somewhat, he still skipped some meals. Additionally, there were no behavioral improvements when he was outside...which was disappointing.

So, fluoxetine was discontinued. Instead, it was replaced with clomipramine. Clomipramine has led to clinical improvement in research for a variety of canine behavioral disorders, including fear, storm phobia, and separation anxiety, when used alongside behavior modification. Duke’s owners were informed of side effects. Just like with us humans, it’s important to do your research ahead of time! So, they kept an eye out for things like gastrointestinal upset, lethargy, and worsening of anxiety or irritability.

Unfortunately, at a six-week follow-up after adding in clomipramine, the clients reported that, while there were no side effects, there was still no behavioral improvement outdoors.

Duke’s owners admitted they were not following the management plan to minimize exposure outdoors, as they were afraid that fewer walks would lead to decreased exercise, which would compromise his quality-of-life. To stimulate Duke and increase his enrichment indoors where he was more willing to engage, Dr. Spano instructed the owners to use a flirt pole and frisbee daily in their spacious hallway, and to rotate novel puzzle toys for him. Luckily, Duke loved these activities!

Once again, the idea of rehoming Duke was revisited. But his owners wanted to explore more solutions. They were instructed to take Duke outdoors only when he had to urinate and defecate. Immediately after, they were to return home, ASAP. The reasoning here is that this allowed choice to be Duke’s biggest reinforcer. Rather than feeling “under fire” so to speak, he knew home was only a few seconds away.





Another wonderful tool was a dog agility studio.

Once per week, Duke's owners packed up the car and took Duke there. He also went to a sheep herding facility. No surprise there, woolly white sheep were far less scary than giant, loud trucks! Video footage revealed Duke thrived at this facility.

Fast forward two months.

Duke now seemed happier and more relaxed. The management plan was proving beneficial. He adored his Flirt Pole, frisbee time, and puzzle toys. He comfortably wore his new harness at home. Still though, Duke was hesitant to move forward on most walks; the furthest he was consistently willing to go was immediately outside his apartment building for a quick potty break. As a result, his clomipramine dosage was increased. The owners were reminded of the potential side effects again due to this dosage adjustment.

The trainer also instructed the owners on implementing a "patterned walking" routine with his new harness. She identified where along the route to get outside that Duke started to show signs of fear: which was immediately outside the apartment building. Every day (provided Duke's body language showed no signs of distress) the owners were to walk Duke with his new harness into the lobby, where he reliably had not shown signs of fear yet. Then, they gave him a high-value treat and returned home. Once it was verified that Duke could handle these short walks to the lobby repeatedly and without signs of distress, the walks were incrementally lengthened with successive repetitions.

Now, here we are 6 months later!

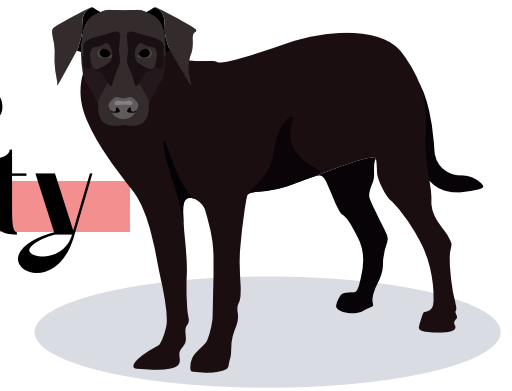
Currently, Duke can go for a relaxed walk around the block. He's still jumpy with the inevitable loud sounds of the city but less intensely. With ongoing indoor enrichment, weekly dog agility classes, sheep herding, and clomipramine, he is better able to handle noises – both inside and outside the home. He remains medically healthy, too!

And for "fraidy dogs" like Duke, that's wonderful news.



The Case of Cali's Separation Anxiety

Dr. Vanessa Spano



All dogs get anxious at times, but when it interferes with their daily lives, it's imperative to get a veterinarian involved.

With separation anxiety in dogs becoming a worrisome trend as working professionals head back to the office, it's important to think about the effect this has on our pups. What humans may perceive as some "normal" behaviors for dogs could in fact be abnormal. This was the case with Cali.

Let's have a look at Dr. Vanessa Spano's experience with Cali to find out what the problem was, what recommendations were suggested, and how to diagnose and treat separation anxiety in dogs.

First up is a brief history on Cali. She is a four-year-old, female, spayed Pit Mix. And though you would likely never know it, Cali was originally a stray. This sweet girl had been adopted by her fur mom at approximately four months of age. She was medically healthy. She had been trained as a puppy in basic obedience and was a loving companion.

Despite her generally happy demeanor, there was one area of her life that was causing both Cali – and her owner – extreme distress...

Poor Cali had separation anxiety!

Cali's primary-care veterinarian had placed her on a doggie-branded calming supplement to be taken daily for the past two months. Yet, there was no improvement.

In order to offer both Cali and her mom some relief, further digging was required by a behavior veterinarian. At the behavior clinic, Dr. Spano recommended both a physical examination and comprehensive blood and urine testing, to ensure there were no underlying medical reasons for the behavior, such as irritability from orthopedic pain or dermatologic discomfort, or metabolic causes. Fortunately, both her physical exam and lab tests were all normal!

Next, a detailed history was taken by Dr. Spano from Cali's owner. During the pandemic, Cali's mom had been working from home, meaning Cali was always underfoot and close by. Three months ago, Cali's mom shifted to a hybrid work schedule that required her to be in the office 2 days per week. For Cali, this was quite the shock. Suddenly, the Pit Mix was all alone between 9am – 3pm. During her mom's second week back at the office, a neighbor complained about Cali. She had been barking – persistently.

In addition, Cali was often covered in drool when her mom returned home. Even more concerning were the scratch marks on the door, where Cali's nails had clawed dangerously deep into the wood. To protect the pooch from self-harm, Cali was crated. And while crate training can be helpful in some cases, in Cali's case, it actually worsened her behavior. She refused to play and self-soothe with toys and puzzle feeders; she even bent the bars of her metal crate with her teeth in an attempt to escape her crate!

Initially, Cali's mom reported that the separation anxiety began when she stopped working exclusively remotely. However, upon further questioning, Dr. Spano concluded this was unlikely the case. Before the pandemic, Cali was regularly left home alone. From Monday-Friday, Cali was by herself (though she did attend doggy daycare one day per week). Cali's mom recalled that as a puppy, Cali never seemed to engage with any enrichment activities when she was left home alone. For instance, yummy treats went uneaten. Toys were ignored. She didn't destroy furniture – like many anxious dogs do. Instead, she would lay at the foot of the door waiting...waiting...waiting for her beloved mommy to return.

Hearing this, it was concluded that Cali always had a mild form of separation anxiety, even as a puppy. Throw a global pandemic and abrupt change in lifestyle into the mix, and BAM! Cali became a four-legged, nervous wreck.

So, what to do?

Behavioral intervention in the form of behavior modification (or training) plus medications were discussed and, in the end, chosen as complimentary courses of action. Behavioral modification would be critical for teaching the dog things like coping mechanisms and relaxation. Even with the best dog trainer on the case, it can be challenging to manage a dog's intense anxiety without pharmaceutical relief; therefore, medications were suggested as well. One medication that is found to be effective in treating separation anxiety in dogs, along with a training program, is fluoxetine hydrochloride (I took out "FDA approved," because technically the branded version, Reconcile, is FDA approved, not the generic [fluoxetine]). That does not mean that every dog with separation anxiety will respond to this medication. Still, it is a reasonable first option.

Behavioral disorders, anxiety included, partly involve a neurochemical imbalance involving one or more neurochemicals, such as serotonin. While there is currently no cost-efficient method of determining which specific neurochemical system(s) may be affected in individual behavior patients, there is ample research identifying selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, such as is fluoxetine hydrochloride, leading to clinical improvement of separation anxiety.

Unfortunately, time was not on anyone's side. Cali's mom feared getting evicted by her landlord because of the barking complaints.

As a result, Cali was started on fluoxetine hydrochloride. Potential side effects, which are generally infrequent and include gastrointestinal upset, lethargy, and worsening of behavior or irritability, were discussed so that, should they occur, Cali's mom would know to report them. It was warned that the long-acting antidepressant may take up to 4 – 6 weeks to show behavioral improvement.

Understanding the seriousness of the situation, Cali's mom hired a trainer who was recommended by veterinary behaviorists. The goal? To appropriately treat separation anxiety without pushing Cali over "threshold" and without using punishment-based techniques, which are unethical and risk worsening anxiety and irritability. By definition, a dog that is "over threshold" is a dog that is stressed, evidenced by the dog's body language. It can be difficult to determine when a dog is stressed, because these signs vary. Some of the more obvious, intense signs include barking, pacing, panting, and growling. Some of the more subtle signs include refusal to engage with treats, yawning, and lip licking. Pushing a dog "over threshold" in training, such as by purposefully allowing them to cry it out in a crate or unknowingly ignoring yawning and lip licking, will only "flood" the patient and potentially make the anxiety worse. It takes a trained, educated eye to both identify a dog that is stressed and to also acknowledge that a stressed-out dog is not in a good head-space to learn.

The veterinary behaviorist-recommended trainer instituted "gradual departures" for Cali. Cali's mom was to identify (via webcam) where along the departure Cali started to show signs of distress; Cali's mom identified this "threshold" at 30 seconds. Cali's mom was to practice multiple departures under this threshold (e.g.: 20 seconds). Once it was verified that Cali could handle these short departures without signs of distress, the departures were incrementally elongated with successive repetitions.

After 1 month, a follow-up was recommended to see how the fluoxetine and training were progressing. Unfortunately, Cali's behaviors were inconsistent. Her mom caught her on camera barking during each departure, though to Cali's credit she did recover from these barking episodes more quickly. Another positive sign was that Cali took some interest in the enrichment left for her, although again it was inconsistent. No side effects were observed from the medication. Eventually, Cali's mom reported being able to leave her home alone comfortably for up to 5 minutes. Not amazing, but certainly a small improvement.

Dr. Vanessa Spano knew that Cali needed more support. Likely the root of the problem had to do with the fact that Cali was inadvertently being "flooded" twice per week when her owner went to the office. While Cali was able to comfortably stay home alone for up to 5 minutes, twice per week she was home alone for up to 6 hours when her mom was at the office! As a next step, it was recommended that Cali attend doggy day care and/or use a short-acting anti-anxiety medication just for the days her mom was to be at the office. Cali's mom agreed to utilize doggy daycare and a pet-sitter. The fluoxetine hydrochloride at its current dosage and behavior modification regimen were continued.

Slowly, Cali's confidence grew. Who would have thought Cali could be left alone for up to 1 hour 3 months after her initial consult?! Dr. Spano did!

At the 6-month mark, Cali could manage 3 hours. Due to the added financial burden of using a dog sitter and doggy daycare, Cali's hydrochloride dosage was also increased.

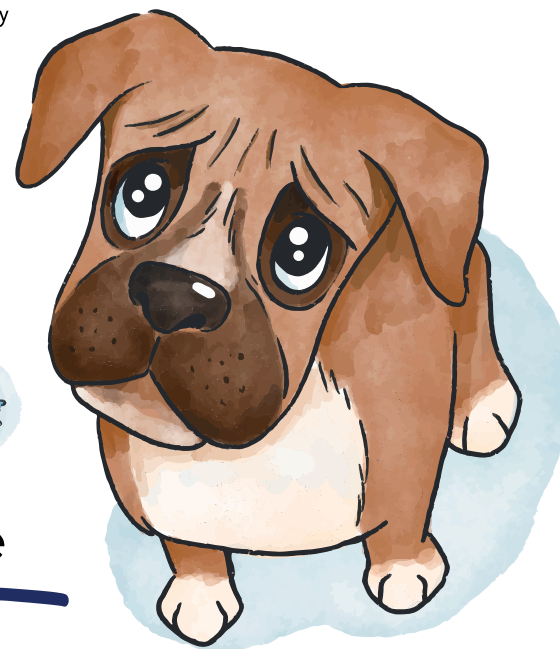
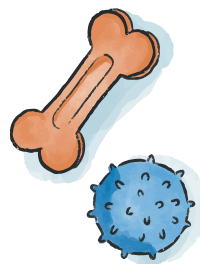
Thanks to continued behavior modification and fluoxetine hydrochloride, 1-year later, Cali is generally able to stay home alone during the workday...which is an incredible accomplishment. Like all dogs who struggle with separation anxiety, she still battles stressful out-of-routine departures, such as being alone on weekends or in the evenings. Luckily, short-acting medications are helpful, though this option is one owners should discuss with their veterinarians in-depth.

Today, Cali remains physically healthy and in good spirits! She has lab testing done every 6 months given she is on daily medication.



Buddy's story

Dr. Amy Pike



Buddy was a 6-year-old Beagle that the owners adopted from a rescue organization 4 years prior to consulting with our office. He was originally found as a young adult stray that had been relinquished by his previous owners for behavior concerns. He spent many months in foster care prior to being adopted by his current owners, my clients.

The biggest concerns that the owners had were destruction, vocalization and house soiling when Buddy was left home alone. If left uncrated, Buddy would destroy window blinds, door frames and carpet, and he would urinate and defecate by the door to the garage. He had broken out of several metal crates prior to coming to see us and the owners did not feel it was safe to confine him as he had broken a tooth during one escape attempt. The owners were also getting complaints from neighbors that Buddy was howling for prolonged periods of time during their absences. During the COVID-19 pandemic Buddy's owners were working from home so the behaviors were not problematic enough to seek treatment, but that would be changing when his owners went back to working outside the home in a few months from the time we met.

Buddy also had several other behavior concerns that the owners wanted to address but felt they were less pressing. He would also drool, pant, pace, and attempt to hide during thunderstorms; Buddy hated car rides and would often vomit, shake and drool the entire time; Buddy would become aggressive to the owners when they tried to pet him or move him, especially in the evenings after they had been gone or when there was a storm that day.

Buddy was diagnosed with separation anxiety, thunderstorm phobia, car ride anxiety, and conflict aggression. The conflict aggression was being made worse on days when Buddy was already anxious from a departure or storm activity, a phenomenon known as trigger stacking.

When treating behavior concerns, we need to address management strategies, behavior modification and, if warranted, medication and product intervention.

Management allows us to avoid the performance of the problematic behavior, thereby decreasing the overall stress of the patient. For the separation anxiety, Buddy was able to

go to a local daycare facility when the owners were unable to be home with him. For his thunderstorm phobia, the owners were instructed to sit with Buddy in their walk-in closet where the sounds of the storm could barely be heard, and a place where he typically tried to hide anyway. Thankfully the owners were within walking distance of Buddy's daycare, his primary care veterinarian and his groomer so they could avoid car rides. For the conflict aggression, the owners were instructed to avoid physically interacting with Buddy after 7pm and to use food lures if they needed him to move on the couch or bed instead of picking him up.

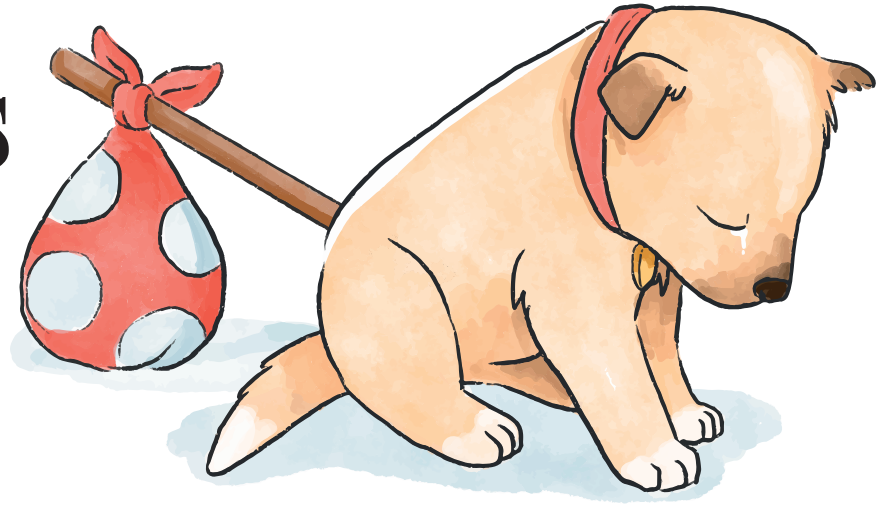
Behavior modification is the use of rewards based training and desensitization (exposure to triggering stimuli at a level where the learner is under threshold and non-reactive) and counter-conditioning (changing the emotion from a negative to a neutral or positive one). Behavior modification began in earnest with my separation anxiety trainer immediately following their initial appointment. The owners were guided on how best to start training Buddy to be comfortable on short controlled departures and to teach Buddy to settle and relax on a safe space which would be used during storms, departures and at night when he was trigger stacked.

Buddy was also started on a medication regimen that included fluoxetine and a pre-departure medication, which would be given 2 hours prior to any departure or car ride. The owner was also given a medicated gel to administer at the first sign of thunderstorm activity. After 4 weeks on fluoxetine, the dose was increased. After 8 weeks, the owners were instructed to increase the dose again to get even better efficacy.

After 4 months, the owners were able to depart their home for 4-6 hours and Buddy would lie down in his safe space and chew on a bone or toy or nap for the duration of their absence. The owners also noted huge improvement in his trigger stacking (and thus resolution of his conflict aggression), startle response to household or street noises, and even better response to storms. The owners were instructed to continue administering the medications as directed and were able to back off on the training plan since they had accomplished their goals.

Gemma's story

Dr. Amy Pike



Gemma was an 8-year-old mix breed that the owners adopted from a rescue organization 7 years prior to beginning medication for behavior concerns. The owner is a rewards-based trainer that is on staff at my hospital and she had worked diligently with Gemma over the years to try and overcome her fear and aggression.

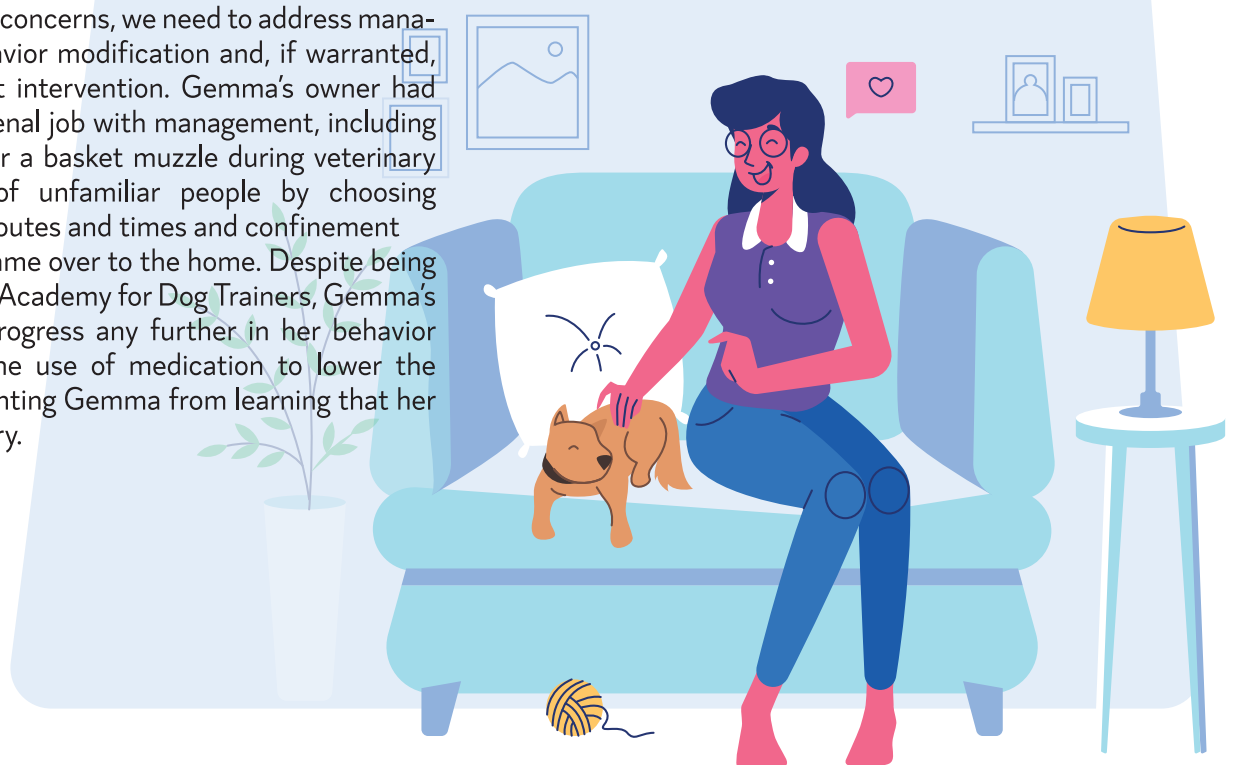
Gemma was fearfully aggression towards any unfamiliar people encountered in her home or on walks. She was also terrified at the vet and had to be muzzled to keep staff safe during examination. During her most recent veterinary examination, the owner was unable to work through Gemma's fears and the veterinarian was unable to even come near her for physical exam. At this point in time, Gemma's owner decided to pursue the use of psychotropic medication to alleviate the fear, anxiety and stress that was still plaguing her on a daily basis (on walks) and compromising the owner's social life, and her own ability to get needed medical care.

Gemma was diagnosed with generalized anxiety, fear-based aggression to unfamiliar people and a situational anxiety to veterinary handling.

When treating behavior concerns, we need to address management strategies, behavior modification and, if warranted, medication and product intervention. Gemma's owner had already done a phenomenal job with management, including training Gemma to wear a basket muzzle during veterinary visits and avoidance of unfamiliar people by choosing low-trafficked walking routes and times and confinement whenever any visitors came over to the home. Despite being a skilled graduate of the Academy for Dog Trainers, Gemma's owner was unable to progress any further in her behavior modification without the use of medication to lower the emotion that was preventing Gemma from learning that her triggers were not so scary.

Gemma was started on fluoxetine. In addition, Gemma was prescribed a combination of two other medications that were to be given 14 hours before and again 2 hours prior to veterinary visits. After 4 weeks on fluoxetine, the dose was increased. After 8 weeks, the owners were instructed to increase the dose again, in an attempt to get even better efficacy.

After 6 months, Gemma was able to accept several new people into the home, including a new dog walker and pet sitter, and a guest that stayed several weeks, by using a previously trained greeting protocol that had been only minimally effective prior to medication administration. In addition, Gemma was easily examined at the vet for a limp that had developed after hiking. Not only was she much more relaxed during examination, she even allowed the staff to feed her treats and take her back to radiology for x-rays without the owner, tasks that would have previously resulted in aggression towards staff. The owner was so pleased with Gemma's progress and wished she had intervened with medication much sooner than she had.



When and how to get help

By Dr. Sophie Curtis

Like humans, it's easy for dogs to pick up bad habits which can become a problem for their owners. Some of these habits can be frustrating and annoying, for instance, jumping up and pulling on the lead. Such problems can be fixed with training. However, other problems may have a big impact on dog owners and their dogs. Such behaviors need behavioral therapy, particularly if there is an underlying emotional cause, e.g. fear, that is affecting the dog's wellbeing.

Much as it can be difficult not to get angry when your dog is doing things you don't want, it is important to keep in mind that no dog is perfect and you don't want to swap your pet for anything. If your four-legged friend has a habit that you would like to change, it's important to stay calm and let him learn how to behave well. Fortunately, many undesirable behaviors can be fixed with some reward-based training. You can teach your dog calmness, and ways to cope with changes. I've put together some tips on how to deal with more challenging behaviors in dogs.

Where to get help with your dog's behavioral problems

✘ Always speak to your veterinarian.

Changes in your dog's behavior can be as a result of illness and pain. It is therefore important to have your dog checked over. Your veterinarian will also give you some tips on helping your canine companion.

✘ Go to a trainer

Ensure that you take your dog to private sessions, or dog training classes with a good trainer, especially if you need some extra help training your dog.

✘ See a behaviorist

Your veterinarian might refer you to a certified behaviorist if your dog's unwanted behavior is more complex. A behaviorist will work with you and your canine friend to find the cause of the problem. She will then put a training plan in place to help you and your dog. Sometimes she will also prescribe medication for your



Behavior modification training

Dr. Sophia Curtis

Behavior modification training is the process of changing your dog's behavior to help with their problem. There are a number of different techniques including: Counter-conditioning and desensitization, and reward-based training.

Reward-based training

This technique can be very helpful if your dog's behavioral problem is related to a breakdown of their training. Reward-based training involves rewarding good behaviors that your dog displays and re-shaping or ignoring the bad. This technique can be used on several dog behavior problems, particularly if you aren't able to find the cause of your dog's behavior and work out what you want to train him instead.

Counter-conditioning and desensitization

Our dogs often display unwanted behaviors because they are actually frightened or unsure of something. Your dog might be barking whenever he sees another dog because he is feeling overwhelmed, and this is how he lets you know that he is uncomfortable. Much as this habit is a natural part of dog communication, it can cause problems to us especially if they are barking all the time. Counter-conditioning and desensitization can help your four-legged friend to change what he feels about the thing that he is scared of by putting the scary thing with something enticing such as a treat, so your dog can learn that good things happen when the thing they used to find scary is around.



How to prevent behavior problems in your puppy

By Dr. Sophie Curtis



We all want our dogs to be obedient and well-mannered, but there will always be times when their behaviors are not perfect. Therefore, it is important to properly train your dog and teach him how to recognize and meet your expectations of being a good dog.

Types of Bad Dog Behavior

Dogs have different dog behavior that may seem bad. Factors such as breed, age, training, and owner preferences determine how bad the behavior is. Generally, dog behavior is considered bad if it is excessive and unwelcome, in spite of the many attempts to correct him. Even though not every dog will exhibit all the bad behaviors mentioned above, different types of dog behavior can include barking, jumping up, begging, whining, digging, counter-surfing, biting or nipping, chewing, leash pulling, chasing, and urine marking.

Controlling Dog Behavior Problems

The first step to in controlling poor behavior in your dog is to determine the cause of his reaction. Several medical conditions can result in poor behavior, such as, a dog with a bladder infection urinating more around the house, or a dog with an ear infection being more sensitive to noises and barking in protest. Anxiety, stress, or unfamiliar stimuli could also trigger bad behavior. It is possible to control the dog's response with different techniques once the source of the poor behavior is discovered. These techniques include:

Prevention

It may be easy to remove the trigger if you know what triggers your dog. For instance, you might want to replace a doorbell when the sound triggers barking. Avoid giving your dog table scraps to keep your dog out of the kitchen if counter-surfing is a problem.

Know Your Dog

Many a time, bad behavior may be because we are not aware of our dogs' needs. Frequent bathroom breaks outside will benefit a pup or a dog that may pee in the house. Recognizing his signals will help you learn what your dog needs so you can help him avoid behaving badly.

Exercise

Bad behaviors, such as chasing or digging, can be as a result of pent-up energy. Giving your canine companion more exercise not only helps burn off energy so your dog isn't tempted to behave poorly, but also reinforces your bond with your pet so it will be more likely to pay attention to you and obey your commands.


Redirection

Bad behaviors such as digging and chewing may be instinctive for your dog and it may be impossible to stop them completely. In this case, redirect your canine friend to more appropriate choices such as; permitting digging in one specific spot to spare the rest of your possessions and yard from unwanted attention or providing safe chew toys.

Ignore the Behavior

Bad behaviors such as barking and jumping up in dogs are intended to get attention. If you ignore these behaviors, your dog will not get the attention he is seeking, and his behavior will eventually change. Avoid shouting and punishing your dog's actions, because bad attention is still attention to him. Other techniques include, Socialization, practice, working with a trainer, and interpreting commands among others.





Does your dog exhibit any of these problematic behaviors when left home alone?

- ✓ Destroying household items
- ✓ Urinating or defecating indoors
- ✓ Barking, howling and/or whining
- ✓ Excessive drooling
- ✓ Frequent pacing
- ✓ Attempt to escape / signs of damage around doors or windows

Your dog may be suffering from Separation Anxiety.



Navigating through a pandemic has been challenging for everyone—except perhaps for our dogs—who have been living a more socially active life than usual because so many pet owners have been working from home.

However, a change back to normal work week routines will leave our dogs with less companionship during the day. Many dogs adopted during the pandemic have no idea what “normal” is for their families. When life resumes some sense of normalcy, the sudden lack of constant contact with people may cause some pets to experience separation anxiety.

What is Separation Anxiety?

Separation anxiety is a condition in which affected dogs may exhibit certain problematic behaviors when left alone, such as when owners leave for work or to run an errand. Whether a particular dog is going to develop separation anxiety depends on several factors:

- Specific factors about the individual dog—their emotional resiliency, level of attachment to the owner, underlying predisposition to anxiety and panic disorders, etc.
- Environmental factors—Will owners be allowed to work from home part-time or will they be going back to the office full time?
- Prior learning and experiences—
 - Has there been appropriate reinforcement for independent behavior?
 - Has excessive attention seeking been rewarded in the past?
 - Did the pet have separation anxiety prior to relinquishment by a former owner?

How Can I Prevent Separation Anxiety?

You may not be able to prevent this disorder from developing in your dog; however, leaving your dog home alone on occasion so he gets used to being there without you may decrease the chances of him developing separation anxiety.

How Is Separation Anxiety Diagnosed?

You should discuss any signs of separation anxiety such as those listed on page 1, including signs that may be suggestive of other disorders, with your veterinarian.^{1,2} Your veterinarian can rule out any medical causes with a physical exam and possibly other diagnostic tests. A video of your dog when home alone may help your veterinarian confirm that these signs are indeed behavioral.

Can My Dog's Separation Anxiety Be Treated?

Once your dog has been diagnosed with separation anxiety, your veterinarian will develop a comprehensive treatment plan that includes behavior modification to help develop your dog's independence and possibly medication.

Behavior Modification

Treatment for separation anxiety involves behavior modification, including the following:

- Try leaving your dog with a delicious snack like a frozen Kong or puzzle toy to not only keep them occupied but also to help associate your departure with something wonderful.
- Remain calm and ignore your dog for 20 to 30 minutes prior to leaving so as not to create a heightened state of arousal just prior to your departure.

- Never punish your dog for house soiling or destruction as it will only serve to increase the anxiety associated with anticipation of your return.

For more information on the initial training steps for separation anxiety, please visit reconcile.com/bond-training-information.

Medication

Depending on the severity, medication, such as Reconcile® (fluoxetine hydrochloride) from PRN® Pharmacal, may be needed to help decrease anxiety. Reconcile is an FDA-approved medication that is commonly used to treat separation anxiety in dogs in conjunction with behavior modification training.^{3,4} Reconcile is a once-a-day flavored, chewable tablet prescribed by your veterinarian.

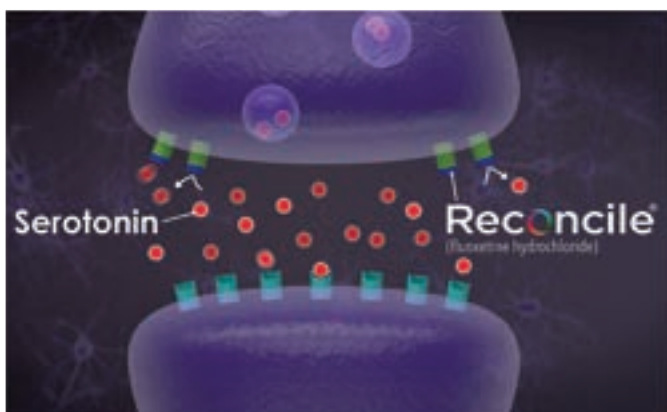


Reconcile® Product Facts

- Reconcile is a flavored, chewable, once-a-day tablet, making administration easier for both the pet owner and their dog.
- Reconcile, developed specifically for dogs with separation anxiety, has been clinically tested and FDA approved for use in dogs.
- Convenient strengths (8 mg, 16 mg, 32 mg and 64 mg); this is unlike generic human formulations.
- Reconcile has an exclusive behavior modification plan; the BOND™ program was designed to help you train your dog using simple, easy-to-understand steps.

How Does Reconcile Work?

Reconcile is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI). Chemical messengers known as neurotransmitters communicate information between nerve cells. Neurotransmitters are released into the space between two cells and are then reabsorbed back into the nerve cell that released them. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that is responsible for many functions within the brain, including the control of anxiety. Low levels of serotonin may result in impaired communication between nerves, producing an increased level of anxiety. Reconcile can help correct this chemical imbalance by blocking the reuptake of serotonin and temporarily increasing its level in the brain.

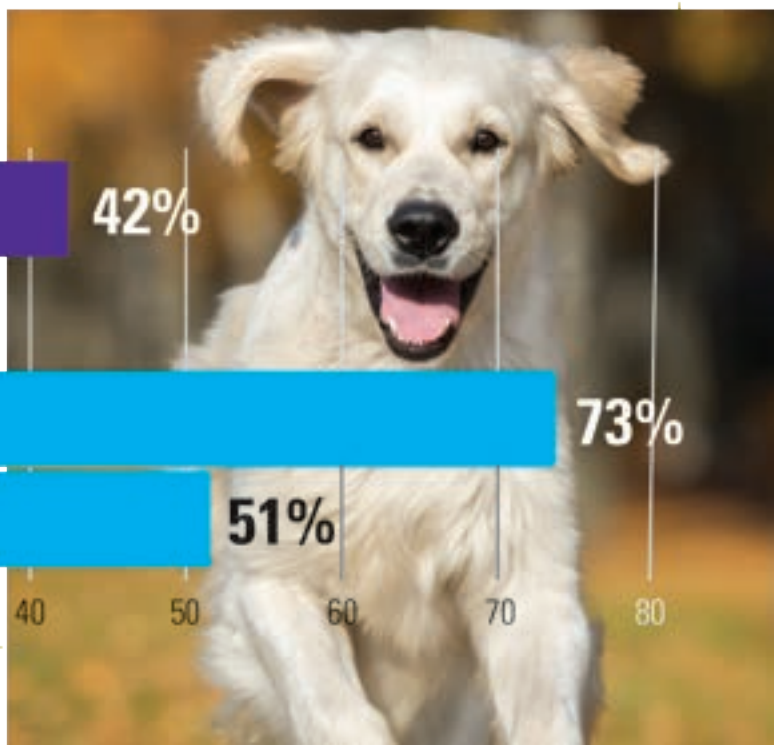
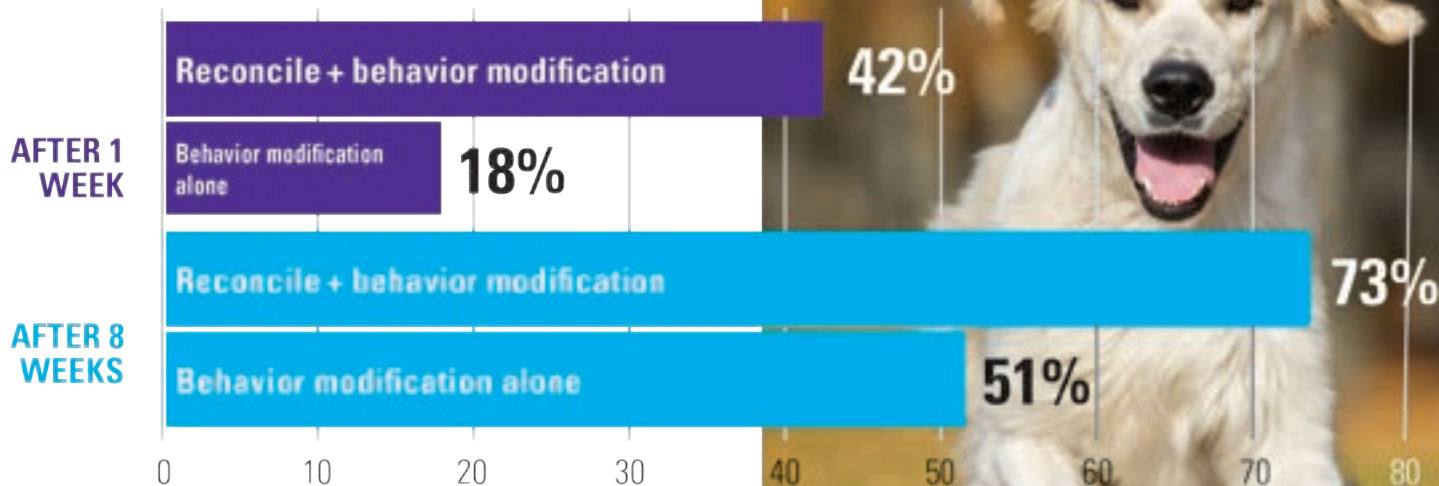


Reconcile works by making your dog more receptive to your training program. A study of 229 dogs receiving behavior modification training showed that a significantly higher number of dogs treated with Reconcile had measurable improvement compared with those receiving a placebo (see study results below).

As a pet owner, it's important to be aware of the typical signs of separation anxiety and discuss them with your veterinarian. It's also important to remember that your dog is not bad but is suffering from a readily treatable medical condition.

Important Safety Information

The most common adverse events in decreasing order of reported frequency are: decreased appetite, depression/ lethargy, shaking/ shivering/tremor, vomiting, restlessness and anxiety, seizures, aggression, diarrhea, mydriasis, vocalization, weight loss, panting, confusion, incoordination, and hypersalivation. Reconcile chewable tablets are contraindicated for dogs with a history of seizures or when used with MAOIs. For product label, including complete safety information, see package insert.



BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TRAINING TIPS

01 WEEK 1 FOCUS: Be Positive.

Reward your dog for positive behaviors to encourage them to do those behaviors in the future. Don't reprimand bad behaviors as it may confuse the dog or cause more anxiety.

02 WEEK 2 FOCUS: Only Reward Calm Behavior.

Ignore attention-seeking behaviors and spend time with your dog when he/she is calm. Utilize daily walks and play time to engage and reward him/her.

03 WEEK 3 FOCUS: No More Drama When You Come and Go.

Train your dog to remain calm when you come or go from home. Be sure to provide a favorite toy or treat before you leave.

04 WEEK 4 FOCUS: Develop Your Dog's Independence.

Teach your dog to be calm and relaxed in a "safe place" at the house. Be sure to reward your dog with treats or attention when he/she is relaxed.

It's important to know that some dogs may show improvement within 1 to 2 weeks of starting treatment and training, however others may take as long as 8 weeks to show improvement. Your veterinarian will monitor progress - with the help of this journal - and discuss alternate treatment plans if no improvement is noted.

Important Safety Information: The most common adverse events reported in decreasing order of reported frequency are: decreased appetite, depression/lethargy, shaking/shivering/tremor, vomiting, restlessness and anxiety, seizures, aggression, diarrhea, dilated pupils, vocalization, weight loss, panting, confusion, incoordination, and excessive salivation. Reconcile chewable tablets are contraindicated for dogs with a history of seizures or when used with drugs that may cause seizures. Consult your veterinarian for complete safety information or see package insert.

Brought to you by:



As you advance through these recommended areas of focus during behavior modification training each week, be sure to preserve previously trained areas of focus. For example, on week three pertaining to reducing drama when leaving the house; ensure that you remain positive (learned in week one) and reward calm behavior (learned in week two).

- 01 WEEK 1 FOCUS: Be Positive.** Reward your dog for positive behaviors to encourage them to do those behaviors in the future. Don't reprimand bad behaviors as it may confuse the dog or cause more anxiety.
- 02 WEEK 2 FOCUS: Only Reward Calm Behavior.** Ignore attention-seeking behaviors and spend time with your dog when he/she is calm. Utilize daily walks and play time to engage and reward him/her.
- 03 WEEK 3 FOCUS: No More Drama When You Come and Go.** Train your dog to remain calm when you come or go from home. Be sure to provide a favorite toy or treat before you leave.
- 04 WEEK 4 FOCUS: Develop Your Dog's Independence.** Teach your dog to be calm and relaxed in a "safe place" at the house. Be sure to reward your dog with treats or attention when he/she is relaxed.

After exercising the BOND™ behavior modification training steps to where you feel progress has been made, begin documenting your dog's progression in the chart below. Print a journal page for each week to document that week's area of focus.

WEEK: _____ AREA OF FOCUS: _____

Rank your dog's behavior on a scale of 1 to 5 with "1" being desirable behavior and "5" being completely undesirable behavior. In the adjacent column, check the box if training was performed.

Days	Training? (Mark with an "X" if training occurred that day)	Destructive Behavior	Excessive Barking or Whining	Inappropriate Elimination or Urination	Excessive Salivation	Other
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						

It's important to know that some dogs may show improvement within 1 to 2 weeks of starting treatment and training, however others may take as long as 8 weeks to show improvement. Your veterinarian will monitor progress - with the help of this journal - and discuss alternate treatment plans if no improvement is noted.

Important Safety Information: The most common adverse events reported in decreasing order of reported frequency are: decreased appetite, depression/lethargy, shaking/shivering/tremor, vomiting, restlessness and anxiety, seizures, aggression, diarrhea, dilated pupils, vocalization, weight loss, panting, confusion, incoordination, and excessive salivation. Reconcile chewable tablets are contraindicated for dogs with a history of seizures or when used with drugs that may cause seizures. Consult your veterinarian for complete safety information or see package insert.

Reconcile®

(fluoxetine hydrochloride)

Affordable. Reliable. Chewable.

PRESCRIBING INFORMATION FOR VETERINARIAN
07-2021

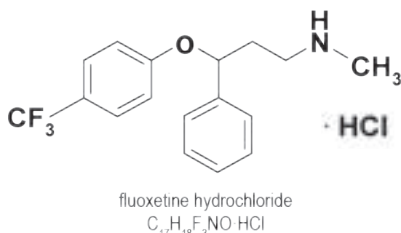
RECONCILE® (fluoxetine hydrochloride) Chewable Tablets

Caution:

Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Description:

RECONCILE is a chewable, flavored tablet that contains fluoxetine hydrochloride. RECONCILE chewable tablets are available in 8, 16, 32, and 64 mg tablet strengths for oral administration to dogs. The active ingredient in RECONCILE chewable tablets is fluoxetine hydrochloride, a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI). The molecular weight of fluoxetine is 345.79. The structural formula is depicted below.



Indications:

RECONCILE chewable tablets are indicated for the treatment of canine separation anxiety in conjunction with a behavior modification plan.

Dosage and Administration:

The recommended dose of RECONCILE chewable tablets is 1–2 mg/kg (0.5–0.9 mg/lb) administered once daily, in conjunction with a behavior modification plan. A typical behavior modification plan consists of the pet owner implementing standard training techniques based on principles such as rewarding appropriate behavior, coming and going in a manner that does not elicit inappropriate responses from the dog, and teaching the dog to be content while alone.

Table 1: Recommended Dose of RECONCILE Chewable Tablets

(lb)	Dog Weight (kg)	No. of Tablets/Day	Tablet Strength
8.8 – 17.6	4.0 – 8.0	1	8
17.7 – 35.2	8.1 – 16.0	1	16
35.3 – 70.4	16.1 – 32.0	1	32
70.5 – 140.8	32.1 – 64.0	1	64

The effectiveness and safety of RECONCILE chewable tablets was demonstrated in a field study in client-owned dogs (see **EFFECTIVENESS** and **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). At the end of the 8-week study, 73% of dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets showed significant improvement ($p=0.010$), as compared to behavior modification alone (51%). During the course of therapy, 42% of dogs showed improvement within the first week, which was significantly greater ($p=0.005$) than with behavior modification alone (18%). The patient's response to therapy should be monitored. If no improvement is noted within 8 weeks, case management should be reevaluated.

The effectiveness and clinical safety of RECONCILE chewable tablets for long-term use (i.e., for more than 8 weeks) has not been evaluated. RECONCILE chewable tablets were evaluated at the recommended label dose for one year in a laboratory safety study in dogs (see **ANIMAL SAFETY**).

Professional judgment should be used in monitoring the patient's response to therapy to determine the need to continue treatment with RECONCILE chewable tablets beyond 8 weeks. To discontinue therapy, it is not necessary to taper or reduce doses because of the long half-life of this product. Continued behavioral modification is recommended to prevent recurrence of the clinical signs.

RECONCILE chewable tablets are readily consumed by dogs or can be administered like other tablet medications, and can be given with or without food.

Professional discretion should be used in determining the need for dose reduction in the event of a possible adverse reaction. Approximately half of patients tolerate a return to the previous dose after 1–2 weeks on a reduced schedule (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**).

If a dose is missed, the next scheduled dose should be administered as prescribed. Do not increase or double the dose.

Contraindications:

RECONCILE chewable tablets are contraindicated for use in dogs with epilepsy or a history of seizures. RECONCILE chewable tablets should not be given concomitantly with drugs that lower the seizure threshold (e.g., phenothiazines such as acepromazine or chlorpromazine).

RECONCILE chewable tablets should not be given in combination with a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) [e.g., selegiline hydrochloride (L-deprenyl) or amitraz], or within a minimum of 14 days of discontinuing therapy with a MAOI.

RECONCILE chewable tablets are contraindicated in dogs with a known hypersensitivity to fluoxetine HCl or other SSRIs.

Because fluoxetine and its major metabolite, norfluoxetine, have long half-lives, a 6-week washout interval should be observed following discontinuation of therapy with RECONCILE chewable tablets prior to the administration of any drug that may adversely interact with fluoxetine or norfluoxetine.

Warnings:

Not for use in humans. **Keep out of reach of children.** In case of accidental ingestion seek medical attention immediately. In humans, the most common symptoms associated with over dosage include seizures, somnolence, nausea, tachycardia, and vomiting. In case of ingestion by a human, contact a physician immediately. For a copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or to report adverse reactions call 1-800-874-9764.

Precautions:

RECONCILE chewable tablets are not recommended for the treatment of aggression. RECONCILE chewable tablets have not been clinically tested for the treatment of other behavioral disorders. Studies to determine the effects of RECONCILE chewable tablets in breeding, pregnant, or lactating dogs and in patients less than 6 months of age have not been conducted.

Seizures may occur in dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets, even in dogs without a history of epilepsy or seizures (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**).

Before prescribing RECONCILE chewable tablets, a comprehensive physical examination should be conducted to rule out causes of inappropriate behavior unrelated to separation anxiety. The examination should include a thorough history and assessment of the patient's household environment and standard practice laboratory tests as appropriate for the patient's age and health status. Veterinarians should be familiar with the risks and benefits of the treatment of behavioral disorders in dogs before initiating therapy. Inappropriate use of RECONCILE chewable tablets, i.e., in the absence of a diagnosis or without concurrent behavior modification, may expose the animal to unnecessary adverse reactions and may not provide any lasting benefit of therapy.

RECONCILE chewable tablets have not been evaluated with drugs that affect the cytochrome P450 enzyme system. RECONCILE chewable tablets should be used with caution when co-administered with any drug that affects the cytochrome P450 enzyme system (for example, ketoconazole). Studies to assess the interaction of RECONCILE chewable tablets with tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs) (for example, amitriptyline and clomipramine) have not been conducted. The minimum washout period to transition dogs from TCAs to RECONCILE chewable tablets has not been evaluated. Published pharmacokinetic data demonstrates that TCAs are cleared 4 days following discontinuation.^{1,2}

Adverse Reactions:

In two North American multi-site field studies, which included a total of 427 dogs, the following adverse reactions were observed:

Seizures:

In one study, one of 112 dogs in the control group and three of 117 dogs that received RECONCILE chewable tablets experienced the serious adverse reaction of seizures. One of the three dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets experienced two seizures 10 days after the end of therapy. Despite escalating phenobarbital doses, the seizures continued and this dog died in status epilepticus approximately six months after the first seizure. Another of the three dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets had experienced one seizure approximately 1½ years prior to study enrollment immediately after receiving head trauma. No additional seizures were reported to have occurred until 45 days after concluding treatment with RECONCILE chewable tablets. During the 1½-year period since the second seizure, this dog's seizure activity increased from single seizures to cluster seizures despite increasing doses of phenobarbital and the addition of oral potassium bromide and rectal diazepam. The third dog treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets and the control dog experienced one seizure 24 days and 35 days, respectively, after the start of therapy; no anticonvulsant therapy was initiated and no further seizures were reported in either dog.

In the second study, one of 99 dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets and one of 99 dogs treated with the control tablet experienced the serious adverse reaction of seizures 9 and 27 days, respectively, after initiation of therapy. The dog treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets was subsequently diagnosed with vestibular disease and the control dog had a history of recurrent hind leg weakness.

In a European multi-site study, 234 dogs were treated with daily doses of fluoxetine chewable tablets ranging from 0.25 mg/kg to 4 mg/kg. One dog treated with a daily dose of 0.4 mg/kg for one month experienced one seizure one week after discontinuing therapy. No anticonvulsant therapy was initiated and no further seizures were reported.

Weight loss:

Of the dogs in the two North American field studies with body weight measurements throughout the study ($n=196$ and $n=185$ in the RECONCILE chewable tablets and control group, respectively), a 5% or greater weight loss (when compared to initial, pre-study body weight) was observed in 58 (29.6%) of dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets and 24 (13.0%) of dogs in the control group. No dogs were withdrawn from clinical studies due to weight loss alone. The following table shows the number of dogs with weight loss, stratified by percent weight loss relative to initial body weight.

Table 2: Dogs with Weight Loss (stratified by percent loss relative to initial body weight)

Treatment Group	≥ 5% to < 10% Number (%)	≥ 10 to < 15% Number (%)	≥ 15% Number (%)
RECONCILE chewable tablets	44 (22.5%)	13 (6.6%)	1* (0.5%)
Control	20 (10.8%)	4 (2.2%)	0 (0%)

* This dog lost 20% of its initial body weight and was the same dog that died in status epilepticus.

Other adverse reactions:

Additional adverse reactions observed in dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets at a rate of 1% or greater were:

Table 3: Adverse Reactions Reported in the North American Field Studies

Adverse Reaction	RECONCILE Chewable Tablets, n=216		Control,* n=211	
	n	%	n	%
Calm/Lethargy/Depression	71	32.9	22	10.4
Decreased Appetite	58	26.9	13	6.2
Vomiting	37	17.1	28	13.3
Shaking/Shivering/Tremor	24	11.1	4	1.9
Diarrhea	21	9.7	17	8.1
Restlessness	16	7.4	8	3.8
Excessive Vocalization (Including Whining)	13	6.0	7	3.3
Aggression	9	4.2	13	6.2
Otitis Externa	6	2.8	2	0.9
Disorientation	5	2.3	1	0.5
Incoordination	5	2.3	0	0.0
Constipation	3	1.4	0	0.0
Excessive Salivation	3	1.4	4	1.9

* The control group received the tablet formulation without fluoxetine.

Dose Reduction:

Twenty dogs in the RECONCILE chewable tablet group and five dogs in the control group required a reduction in dose due to unacceptable adverse reactions, generally anorexia, vomiting, shaking and depression. Lowering the dose eliminated or reduced the severity of these adverse reactions in the RECONCILE chewable tablet group only. Resumption of the full dose of RECONCILE chewable tablets resulted in a return of the initial adverse reactions in approximately half of the affected dogs. The majority of these adverse reactions were intermittent and mild. However, one dog experienced recurrence of severe adverse reactions, which necessitated withdrawal from the study for that dog. Additionally, two dogs required a second dose reduction of RECONCILE chewable tablets. Effectiveness was maintained in a majority of those dogs in which a dose reduction was necessary.

Post Approval Experience (Rev. 2010):

The following adverse events are based on post-approval adverse drug experience reporting with RECONCILE chewable tablets. Not all adverse reactions are reported to FDA CVM. It is not always possible to reliably estimate the adverse event frequency or establish a causal relationship to product exposure using this data.

The following adverse events are listed in decreasing order of reported frequency: decreased appetite, depression/lethargy, shaking/shivering/tremor, vomiting, restlessness and anxiety, seizures, aggression, diarrhea, mydriasis, vocalization, weight loss, panting, confusion, incoordination, and hypersalivation.

For a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or to report suspected adverse drug events, contact Pegasus Laboratories at 1-800-874-9764. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or <http://www.fda.gov/Animal/Veterinary/SafetyHealth>.

Clinical Pharmacology:

Fluoxetine exerts its effect by inhibiting the reuptake of serotonin at the pre-synaptic neuron. Fluoxetine does not act as a sedative. Fluoxetine is well absorbed after oral administration (~72%). It is largely metabolized in the liver by cytochrome P-450 enzyme system to norfluoxetine, an equipotent SSRI that contributes to the efficacy of RECONCILE chewable tablets.

After a single dose, and also at steady state, calculations were made as follows:

Table 4: Single Dose* Pharmacokinetic Parameters of Fluoxetine Hydrochloride (mean ± standard error).

	AUC _{0-∞} (µg·hr/mL)	C _{max} (ng/mL)	T _{max} (hr)	T _{1/2} (hr)	T _{1/2} Range (hr)
Fluoxetine	1.388 (±0.137)	126.6 (±12.3)	1.8 (±0.2)	6.2 (±0.8)	3.0 – 12.9
Norfluoxetine	11.44 (±0.74)	138.3 (±9.6)	12.8 (±1.7)	49 (±3)	33.0 – 64.0

In a 21-day study, fluoxetine was administered daily at a dose of 0.75, 1.5 and 3.0 mg/kg to laboratory Beagles. The maximum plasma concentration (C_{max}) and area under the plasma concentration-time curve (AUC) for fluoxetine were approximately dose proportional between 0.75 and 1.5 mg/kg, with a greater than dose proportional increase at 3 mg/kg. Norfluoxetine C_{max} and AUC were generally dose proportional.

Although steady state appeared to be reached within 10 days in the 21-day study, a continuous increase in trough concentrations was observed in a one year, multiple-dose laboratory safety study. In this study, dogs administered a 1 mg/kg dose of fluoxetine had plasma fluoxetine concentrations that continued to increase over the one-year dosing period. A similar increase in concentrations was observed with norfluoxetine. This phenomenon was not observed at higher doses. During the one-year dosing interval and the subsequent two-month recovery period, there were no changes in the nature and frequency of adverse reactions observed as compared to those seen by Day 28 of fluoxetine administration.

Effectiveness:

In one randomized multi-centered, double-blinded, vehicle-controlled study of 8 weeks duration, 229 dogs were evaluated at 34 investigative sites in the United States and Canada. One hundred seventeen dogs were randomized to 1–2 mg/kg/day of RECONCILE chewable tablets and 112 dogs were randomized to the control group. Both groups underwent concurrent behavior modification. In seven of the eight weeks, the percentage of dogs with improved overall separation anxiety scores was significantly higher (p < 0.05) among dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets compared to dogs that received the control tablet. At the end of the study, 73% of dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets showed significant improvement (p=0.010) as compared to 51% of dogs treated with behavior modification alone.

Dogs treated with RECONCILE chewable tablets also showed improvement in destructive behavior, excessive vocalization, and restlessness over dogs that received the control tablet. In addition, dogs in both groups experienced improvement in inappropriate urination, inappropriate defecation, excessive salivation, excessive licking/grooming, shaking/shivering and depression. Overall separation anxiety severity scores improved more rapidly for dogs taking RECONCILE chewable tablets than those dogs receiving the control tablet. The same effect was also noted for the individual scores for excessive vocalization and depression.

Animal Safety:

In a one-year laboratory safety study, dogs were dosed daily at 1, 4.5, and 20 mg/kg/day of a gelatin capsule filled with fluoxetine powder. Based upon the results of a relative bioavailability study comparing the fluoxetine-filled capsule versus the RECONCILE chewable tablets, the corresponding equivalent doses were 0.87, 3.9, and 17.4 mg/kg/day of RECONCILE chewable tablets (where the average ratio of fluoxetine AUC values for RECONCILE chewable tablets/fluoxetine-filled capsule = 1.15).

Three of five female dogs in the 20 mg/kg group died or were euthanized during the first six months of the study. The high dose was decreased to 10 mg/kg/day (equivalent to 8.7 mg/kg/day of RECONCILE chewable tablets) for the last six months of the treatment, and all remaining dogs completed the study. One dog in the 1 mg/kg group (equivalent to 0.87 mg/kg/day of RECONCILE chewable tablets) and two dogs in the 20 mg/kg group (equivalent to 17.4 mg/kg/day of RECONCILE chewable tablets) experienced a seizure. Aggressive behavior, ataxia, salivation at dosing, hyperesthesia, nystagmus, thin body condition, weakness, lethargy, diarrhea and head tilt were also noted in the high dose group. Anorexia, tremors, decreased pupillary light response, mydriasis, vomiting, and decreased weight gain were observed in all treatment groups, but occurred more frequently in the high dose group. With the exception of decreased weight gain, all abnormal observations resolved by the end of a two-month recovery period. Evidence of phospholipidosis was noted in the lung, liver, adrenal glands, lymph nodes, spleen, retina and white blood cells of all groups, which resolved during the recovery period. Fluoxetine caused no marked or consistent effects on hematology, blood chemistries or urinalysis. Bradycardia was absent on the electrocardiogram in the control and lowest dose groups, but was mildly present in a dose-dependent manner in the two higher dose groups. There were no effects noted on gross organ examination.

Storage Information:

Store at 20–25°C (68–77°F). Excursions permitted between 15–30°C (59–86°F). Do not remove desiccant from the bottle. Completely close bottle between uses.

How Supplied:

RECONCILE is supplied in 8mg, 16mg, 32mg and 64mg strengths, as 30 or 90 tablets per bottle, with a child-resistant cap. Approved by FDA under NADA #141-272.

Manufactured by:

Pegasus Laboratories, Inc. • Employee-Owned • Pensacola, FL 32514 • Manufactured in the USA

¹Plumb DC. Amitriptyline. Veterinary Drug Handbook, 5th ed (Pocket Edition). Ames, IA. Iowa State Press, 2002; p 39.

²Hewson CJ, et al. The pharmacokinetics of clomipramine and desmethylclomipramine in dogs. Parameter estimates following a single oral dose and 28 consecutive daily doses of clomipramine. J Vet Pharmacol Therap. 1998;21:214-222.



References

- Bamberger M, Houpt KA. Signalment factors, comorbidity, and trends in behavior diagnoses in dogs: 1,644 cases (1991–2001). JAVMA. 2006;229(10):1591-1601.
- Overall KL., Dunham AE, Frank D. Frequency of nonspecific clinical signs in dogs with separation anxiety, thunderstorm phobia, and noise phobia, alone or in combination. JAVMA. 2001;219(4):467-473.
- Simpson BS et al. Effects of Reconcile (fluoxetine) chewable tablets plus behavior management for canine separation anxiety. Vet Therapeut. 2007;8(1)18.
- Landsberg GM et al. Effectiveness of fluoxetine chewable tablets in the treatment of canine separation anxiety. J Vet Behav. 2008;3(1):12-19.