

Simple & Effective Tips to Reduce Dog Anxiety

Key Takeaways:

- Dogs experience anxiety due to separation, aging, and fear
- Signs of anxiety in your dog may include aggression, panting, destructive behavior, and others
- Anxiety may be prevented by proper socialization, obedience training, and other techniques
- Dog anxiety can be reduced with counter training and other methods
- Medications such as CBD oil have been effective for reducing anxiety in some dogs
- Find a dog trainer specialist to help the situation

Dog anxiety is a very real thing. Even [responsible pet owners](#) who take their dogs in for regular vet and groomer visits are surprised to learn dogs have feelings. They aren't simply reacting to what happens around them based on instinct.

While they don't have the complete range of feelings we do, dogs have a surprisingly wide range of emotions. Your pooch feels anxious just like you do.

When we take our dogs to their appointments, the experience can be very stressful for our pets. If they never developed the skills to manage their emotions, routine trips to getting bathed at the groomer or a wellness visit to the vet can be stressful.

If left unchecked, your dog's anxiety could lead to anxiety disorders, destructive behavior, and more. This article will give you signs to look for in your dog, some strategies to prevent your dog from feeling anxious, and tips to reduce anxiety in your dog.

What Causes Anxiety in Dogs?

Anxiety in dogs is natural and expected, just like people. Your dog may experience anxiety when separated from you and your family. Dogs are social creatures and don't like to be alone.

Your dog's anxiety may be tied to fear of the environment, including other dogs, loud noises, etc. Or your dog may feel anxious because of aging. As dogs get older, like people, their cognitive abilities may begin to fail and they may be prone to diseases like CDB.

What Are Some Signs of Dog Anxiety?

Dogs are very expressive animals. Even though they cannot speak to us, dogs will use several ways to show their feelings. Once you understand how a dog communicates, it's very easy to tell when she is feeling anxious.

Early warning signs – Look for excessive panting, drooling, excessive barking, pacing, and general restlessness. Anxiety goes hand-in-hand with fight or flight syndrome. The release of adrenaline causes your dog to find ways to burn off the extra energy.

Peeing or pooping in the house - When dogs are feeling anxious, they may go potty in the house not out of defiance but simply because they are upset. Even housebroken dogs can do this, which proves frustrating to their owners.

Destructive behavior – An anxious dog may rip apart or destroy your belongings to let you know she's upset at being left alone. Dogs in this state often target items near the doors of the house. From their point of view, that's the source of the trouble.

Aggressive behavior – A fearful dog may try to cover up her fear by becoming aggressive. She may use aggression to tell other animals or people to stay out of her space.

Not all dogs display the same signs of anxiety. Like people, dogs are individuals. Become familiar with your dog's regular behaviors. Pay close attention to how your dog behaves when she's happy. If her behaviors change, look for anything that has changed. Are you away from home more often? Do you have more houseguests than usual?

How Can I Prevent Anxiety in My Dog?

It is far easier to take steps to prevent dog anxiety than it is to treat it. A key component is to build confidence in your dog. With enough confidence, your dog will be better equipped to handle stressful situations without a downward spiral. Try these simple steps to increase your dog's feelings of security.

- **Positive socializations** – Dogs learn a lot of beneficial dog behaviors from other dogs. Many experts state that dogs without proper socialization before 10 months were more likely to have [anxiety issues](#). Have your pooch interact with other well-adjusted dogs in a safe manner. Take your dog to your groomer before her first visit so she can meet the folks who will be bathing her or giving her a haircut.

- **Give your dog a safe space** - Dogs are den animals. When you provide a crate for your dog to sleep in, you are not being cruel, despite how you may feel. Never use the crate for punishment and your dog will come to see her crate as a place to go when excitement is getting too intense.

- **Provide your dog with long-lasting edible goodies** – A “puzzle food” is a treat or food placed in a dog-friendly container that is difficult to remove. The puzzler, toy, or container allows your dog access to remove the food...but she has to work for it. This gives her something to do that keeps her occupied while you are away.

- **Change your routines** – Do you always do certain things before you leave home? If you always comb your area, go to the bathroom, and get a drink of water in that order departing, your dog may recognize your patterns. Start doing some of those same activities throughout the day. Do them at times when you are not leaving your home.

- **Leave in a lowkey manner** – Say goodbye to your dog, but don't make a big deal of how much you'll miss her. Dogs sense our energy and often take cues on how to feel or behave from those around them. If you're upset leaving, your dog's anxiety may rise. Leave without making it a big deal.

We can often prevent anxiety in dogs by helping dogs respond differently to their environment. Dogs are highly adaptable, so simple training and positive reinforcement can produce wonders. Become familiar with several methods to help your dog, as not every pooch will respond in the same way.

How Can I Reduce Anxiety in My Dog?

There are many medications and remedies you can give your pup anxiety. Before you try anything, check with your veterinarian. Your vet will be able to give you an idea of any possible side effects and signs to look for.

CBD oil – Many dog owners claim CBD oil reduces their dogs' anxiety levels. Despite the claims of success, remember that at the time of this writing, CBD oils are not yet regulated.

Antidepressants – Clomipramine, fluoxetine, and benzodiazepine are sometimes prescribed for dog anxiety.

Selegiline – This drug is sometimes prescribed for senior dogs who suffer from [Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome](#), or CDS.

Natural products – Products such as calming treats, vests, and [anxiety jackets](#) have been shown to help dogs reduce anxiety, but only in the short term. If your dog suffers from predictable events, such as thunderstorms, these may be worth considering.

Dog behavioral specialist – If you have done all you can, consider a professional trainer. Some dog trainers specialize in helping dogs reduce anxiety. A [Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist or CAAB](#) may be able to help your pooch unlearn negative anxiety behaviors.

Wrapping Up

To be a [better pup parent](#) to your dog, observe her regular behaviors. When those behaviors change, look at everything surrounding your dog to see what has changed. Under your vet's guidance, try different methods.

Prevent anxiety issues by socializing your pup and having her meet her vet and groomer before she has to go for an appointment. Don't be afraid to hire a professional trainer if you aren't making headway with your pup.

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