



Leaving Your Dog Home Alone

It is important to leave your new dog alone for short periods of time throughout your first few days together. It's true that spending extra time with your new dog can make the transition to a new home easier, but it is equally important to teach them that being alone is a normal part of everyday life.

Tips for Leaving Your Dog Home Alone

- **Make frequent, short departures** – The shelter can be a stressful place for a dog and it may take a few days or a few weeks for your dog to adjust to life at home. The first time you leave put your dog in a safe area, like a crate or puppy-proofed kitchen, and go out to get the mail or walk around the block. Gradually increase the amount of time your dog is left alone.
- **Give her a place of her own** – Too much space can be trouble for a dog that is nervous about being in a new place and doesn't yet know the rules. A stressed or nervous dog may be more likely to chew inappropriate items. Provide your dog with a comfortable bed and lots of fun interactive toys!
- **Exercise, exercise, exercise!** A tired dog is a well behaved dog.
- **Give her something to do while you are gone** – Fill a kong or sterilized bone with peanut butter, canned food and other delicious treats. Kongs are like a crossword puzzle for dogs! Visit the Humane Society's re-Tail store or a local pet store for a variety of interactive dog toys. Provide your dog with something to focus on other than your absence.
- **Make your departures something to look forward to** – Whenever you leave the house give your dog a treat! Teach your dog that your departure does not signify the end of all things good but instead that they will receive a kong, biscuit hunt, or interactive food toy.
- **Make your exits and entrances low-key** – Say a consistent phrase every time you leave, and depart quickly. When you return, attend to other tasks before greeting your dogs. Hang up your keys, put away your coat, and then greet your dogs only after they are calm. If your arrival is like a carnival she may anxiously await it all day! For a dog who becomes anxious when left home alone, try to prevent her from watching your entrances and exits (i.e. restrict her to one room or a crate where she cannot see you leave), and remember to give her a distraction (like a delicious stuffed kong) as you prepare to leave. Contact the behaviorist at the Humane Society if you think your dog may suffer from separation anxiety.

We Can Help! The Training and Behavior Department at the Humane Society of Western Montana has a variety of resources available to help you and your pets live in harmony! The Humane Society has several dog trainers and a behaviorist on staff to provide affordable group and private training lessons and free behavior consultations.

- Contact Jean, our Behaviorist for a free pet behavior consultation by emailing behavior@myhswm.org or calling the Behavior Helpline at (406) 549-9295.
- Contact Mariah, a Certified Professional Dog Trainer, to inquire about private lessons or a group training class. Email outreach@myhswm.org or call (406) 549-HSWM.
- Check out our website at www.myhswm.org for a complete listing of dog classes, rates and additional information.