

Preparing dogs for life after Shelter in Place

While dogs are certainly happy to have their people at home and receive a lot of extra walks and attention during the pandemic, it is a good idea to prepare them for when life goes back to normal and their families go back to work and/or school.

 **Some dogs will quickly get used to having more alone time. For those pets, following these few steps might be enough to adjust to the “back to work” routine.**

- exercise dogs prior to leaving the house. A tired dog is a well-behaved dog
- set them up with a safe long-lasting treat (e.g. frozen Kong, Nyla bone)
- and off you go!

 **Others might need a bit more work. You have time to practice now, so here are some tips to get started on the routine to prevent the anxiety of being left alone:**

- Start practicing mini absences (seconds or minutes depending on the dog)
 - Don't let your dog follow you from room to room. Teach him/her it is OK to be alone for a few minutes, leave him in a room while you head over to the kitchen to prepare some tea for example
 - Go out the front door for a few seconds and come back
- Desensitize your dog to the “going away” clues: pick up your bag or keys, put outside shoes on or jacket, and sit down to watch TV or read a book
- Tone down your departures and arrivals, don't give them a ton of attention or get super excited before leaving or after returning to the house
- Provide mental exercise (play “find it!” with treats or yourself, practice some tricks)
- Don't take them with you to every single outing or walk. Teach them that sometimes they get to stay home and relax, while you do your workout

 **When routine goes back to normal, some dogs might need a break halfway through the day:**

- Hire a dog walker or get a friend to walk your dog midday if you are gone for a long stretch of time
- If your dog is too stressed (barking, urinating/defecating, trying to escape) or becomes destructive when alone, find a trainer that can help you set up a routine to treat the separation distress.



Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

**Please contact us,
we are here to help!**

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