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DOG TRAINING & BEHAVIOUR



Post Pandemic life

Preparing your Dog for Life after Lockdown

With having almost a whole year with family at home, even dogs who have never experienced separation anxiety may have some challenges. Therefore it is important we all address this from today, including young puppies.

If we prepare dogs now for life after lockdown, we will not find ourselves on our first day back at work, or off for a trip to the shops with a long awaited coffee and cake with a best mate, that our dog is experiencing tremendous distress and anxiety back at home.

1

SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE

Increase the departure duration very slowly

2

CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Rehearsed repetition of absences

3

HELP PREVENT CONTACT ADDICTION

Prevent shadowing around the house



Have a video set up at home, as this is key in any diagnosis and to see how comfortable your dog is when left.



Practise now, regular but short and brief absences. Chilled departures, with warm and chilled out greetings on return.



When you are home, put some focus on enrichment activities and mental stimulation with your dog - get your dog hooked on a kong or lick mat!

Sadly, many dogs experience true panic and distress in absence from their care givers. This strong emotion is very real to them, it may seem irrational to us but just like us humans we can experience true panic when flying, yet it is more dangerous to cross the road.

This condition can be completely overwhelming and very distressing for all involved. True separation distress is a welfare issue, these dogs really are suffering.



It is very helpful to video your dog when you are out to see how they cope and know if they are comfortable or not. Malena De Martini had found research that there is no correlation with separation anxiety to spoiling your dog, it also appears some dogs may have a genetic pre disposition to develop the condition.

Some dogs will need building up to being left alone with small steps, with some dogs requiring an earlier starting point, where the care giver implements the desensitising process without even leaving the house.

You are ultimately aiming to reduce the anxiety associated with your departure, rather than attempt to treat the symptoms directly (symptoms being undesirable behaviours when the care givers are absent from anything from panting, attempting to escape, elimination in the house and many more).

“Good luck with your preparation to life after lockdown!”

It is also kind not to ignore your dog when you return home (Remember, most dogs when you do a rehearsed repetition of absences will get bored of the process and no longer get so distressed).

Planning is key to success

A good plan would be to have a series of planned departures with a gradual increase in duration, in small increments that dosent bring on any anxiety. The most effective way would be to increase the departure duration very slowly, but with the greatest number of short departures.

