

# LEAVING YOUR DOG AT HOME ALONE

Dogs are highly social animals that prefer to spend their days with company. However, it's quite normal for their humans to need to be away from home for eight or more hours per day. We've put together our top tips to help keep your dog out of mischief while they're home alone.

## Provide entertainment

To keep your dog busy while you're away we recommend freezing a portion of their meal. Instead of leaving kibble in a bowl for your dog to gobble up in a few seconds, simply place some kibble, water and a little stock into a container and pop the mixture into the freezer.

When you're ready to leave the house turn the frozen treat out for your dog to enjoy licking and nibbling at. Other ideas to keep pets entertained include providing a sandpit, wading pool or hiding some food treats around the garden for your pooch to find.



## Reduce stress

Dogs who spend their time outside when alone can be overstimulated by neighboring dogs or passersby. Spend time teaching your dog that the yard is a good place to relax. You can also use visual barriers to prevent your dog from getting upset by people or other dogs passing by.



## Doggie-proof your home

It's always a good idea to dog-proof your home, just as you would baby-proof. Dogs are likely to seek out entertainment when alone and the best way to make sure they don't pick the wrong objects to chew or play with is to put them out of reach.

Introduce food dispensing toys, puzzles or games while you're together to encourage your dog to play with the right objects.

## Create positive associations

Your dog is likely to be happiest if left alone in a space that they're used to and associate with calm and comfort. If your pup spends the majority of their time indoors when you're at home they may feel more comfortable being left indoors with familiar smells and sounds.

If you decide to put your dog outside while you're away, it's important to spend lots of time outside with them when you're home as well. This will break the pattern that going outside usually means alone time and will help your dog to associate the yard with positive experiences instead.

Pet or baby monitors are a useful tool to check on your pets while you're out. If you notice signs of distress such as barking, pacing or excessive panting, your dog might be experiencing separation related anxiety when left alone. We recommend consulting a qualified Behaviour Veterinarian for advice.