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The Intuitive Connection

Separation Anxiety



Our pets hate it when we leave them home alone. They may cry, pout, or even appear depressed. However, for some pets, separation can cause severe trauma. Known as separation anxiety, distress is triggered when the guardian (or person the animal is attached to) leaves the animal. The departure can be for a few minutes (like to go get the mail) or for extended periods (like when going to work). Whatever the case, the animal becomes upset when not with their person, and even become agitated when their person is attempting to leave.

Does your animal suffer from separation anxiety? Here are some symptoms:

- Urinating or defecating
- Barking, whining, vocalizing, or howling
- Hiding
- Drooling or pacing
- Loss of appetite or vomiting
- Excessive grooming
- Chewing, digging or destruction
 - * Some animals will chew on objects, door frames, window coverings, or window sills, or will dig at doorways or fences. These behaviors can result in injured paws, broken teeth, or stomach issues if items are ingested.
- Blocking or rushing exit points
- Following guardian from room to room when home (not letting the guardian out of their sight)
- Escaping

There is no one explanation as to why animals exhibit this behavior. It is known that animals adopted from rescues or shelters are more likely to display separation anxiety versus an animal that has been raised in one home as a baby. There are some steps you can take to determine whether you are dealing with separation anxiety or another issue.

1. Ask yourself does the behavior occur while you are home? If the behavior only occurs during your absence, it might be due to separation anxiety.

2. Rule out any medical conditions. Urinating, defecating, loss of appetite, vomiting and excessing grooming, for example, can all be signs of a medical condition. Also, if your animal is on medication, make sure the medication isn't the cause of the problem. See your vet if this may be a concern.
3. Rule out any behavior or training issues. Urinating or defecating could be a training issue. Chewing, digging or destruction could be due to a juvenile animal or boredom from lack of mental stimulation. Blocking, rushing exit points or escaping could also be a training issue. Excessive barking, vocalizing or howling could also be a training issue or a known trait for specific breeds. Again, ask yourself if the behavior occurs while you are at home, or only when you are away.

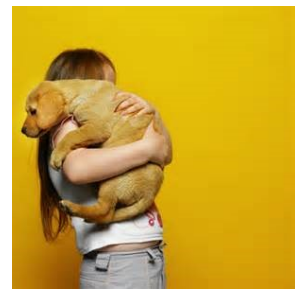
The good news is there are steps you can take to help your animal overcome separation anxiety. For cases of mild separation anxiety, try "counterconditioning" the animal. Counterconditioning is a process that takes the animal's fear of separation and instead associates it with something positive. Over time, the animal learns there is something positive to look forward to and associates this positive reward with the separation. For example, every time you leave, your dog gets a puzzle toy filled with yummy treats. For cats, try hiding special treats throughout the house or give them an interactive toy. This special treat/toy is only put out during the separation and is removed when you come home.

For cases of severe separation anxiety, the above counterconditioning may not work as the animal will likely have no interest in treats or toys. Instead, start by mixing up your routine. If your animal begins to get anxious when you are getting ready or when you pick up your keys, change it up. Try picking up your keys, and then sitting down at the kitchen table for 10 minutes. Put on your coat and then sit down and watch TV. Mix things up so your animal "unlearns" your departure cues. You will need to do this many times a day over the course of a few weeks.

Once your animal becomes less anxious about your departure, you can begin working on the actual separation. Try leaving by a different door (for example through the garage instead of the front door). Incorporate short absences, lasting only 1-2 seconds. Build on the absences, making them a little longer. Once you've reached 5-10 seconds, add the counterconditioning treat or toy. Space out the separations and make sure your animal is completely relaxed before separating again. This type of conditioning will need to take place over several weeks, gradually building up your time away from your animal.

Some other suggestions are:

- Take your animal with you, if possible.
- Arrange for a family member, friend or pet sitter to stay with the animal.
- Take your animal to "daycare."
- Take your animal and leave them in the car, if possible and only when safe.
- Try crating your animal.
- Make sure your animal gets lots of exercise before you leave.
- Leave a radio or TV on softly for background noise. Make sure the noise is soothing.
- Keep your hellos and goodbyes very calm and short. Don't add additional energy, and in turn anxiety to the process. Say goodbye, give a short pat, tell them when you will be back, and leave without any further fanfare. The same should occur on the return, say hello, and don't give them any more attention until they are calm and relaxed.
- Look into medication, homeopathic or natural remedies. Some homeopathic or natural remedies you can try are: Rescue Remedy, Lavender, Chamomile, Lemon, or even healing crystals such as Prehnite, Amethyst, Hematite or Rutilated Quartz.



Finally, you may want to consult with an animal communicator or behaviorist. A communicator will be able to find out why your animal has the anxiety, while the behaviorist will be able to give you specific things to do to calm your animal's behavior and reduce the anxiety. Understanding why your animal is experiencing the anxiety can go a long way in coming up with a game plan on how to reduce their stress and ultimately change their behavior. Here is an example that a friend of mine is experiencing:

My friend Susie adopted a rescue dog she named Buddy about 2 months ago. Buddy is a cocker spaniel mix and is relatively calm. He has short bursts of excitement and play (usually lasting 10 minutes or less), followed by lots of sleeping or snuggling the rest of the time. He has really bonded with Susie, so much so that she can't leave home without him. When Susie leaves, Buddy experiences severe separation anxiety. He paces, pants, whines, and howls the entire time she is gone. When put in a crate he urinated or defecated on himself. Even though her husband is home, there is no soothing Buddy when Susie is gone. I recently visited her and Buddy to do some communicating. This is what I learned from Buddy.

As a puppy, he was with a family, including a little girl who he loved. One day, he was ripped away from the little girl (literally out of her arms, he showed me the visual of her reaching out her hands towards him and crying) and dumped along the road away from the only home he ever knew. When he was finally rescued alongside a freeway, he was matted and very thin. He was friendly, but withdrawn and fearful. How could someone do this? We will never know the full story, but the impression I received is that Buddy was the typical playful, barking, un-potty trained puppy who apparently became too much "work" for someone.

No wonder this poor little guy has separation issues. I did some energy work on Buddy to help him begin to release his fear of abandonment, but this is not going to be a one-time fix. It will take work, understanding, and patience on Susie's part, and time on Buddy's part for him to finally release the past and fear and accept that he is in a loving home where he never has to worry for anything again.

I applaud Susie, and anyone else who is committed to helping their animal overcome separation anxiety. With lots of love, we can all make a difference in the lives of our animals, and the love we get from them in return is immeasurable.



CPR For Dogs and Cats. What To Do If Your Pet Starts Choking or Can't Breathe.

I recently saw this article on Facebook and I just had to share. *This article originally appeared on DogHeirs.com and is reprinted with permission.*

Do you know what to do if your pet stops breathing? Knowing a few emergency procedures if your dog or cat is choking, or having difficulty breathing, could save your pet's life because you may not have time to get to a vet. Here are the steps for doing CPR on a dog and cat. CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) preserves brain function until proper blood circulation and breathing can be restored. The signs that indicate the need for CPR include unconsciousness, lack of arousal, lack of physical movement, or eye blinking. These symptoms can occur from drowning, choking, electrical shock, or a number of other situations. If your pet has a foreign object stuck in his throat, it is important to try and dislodge it before performing CPR.

Performing mouth-to-snout resuscitation

The following information has been updated with latest recommended guidelines outlined by the first evidence-based research on how best to resuscitate dogs and cats in cardiac arrest. It was published in June 2012 by the Reassessment Campaign on Veterinary Resuscitation (RECOVER). The study recommends a few updates to past manual CPR practices on dogs.

The primary new recommendations are:

- Perform 100-120 chest compressions per minute
- Perform a compression to mouth-to-snout ventilation ratio of 30 compressions followed by 2 breaths
- Perform cardiac massage / chest compressions according to the different chest types and sizes of dogs (see diagrams on next page).



The key to CPR is remembering the ABCs:

- **Airway,**
- **Breathing,** and
- **Cardiac compression.**

To perform the three techniques, follow these steps.

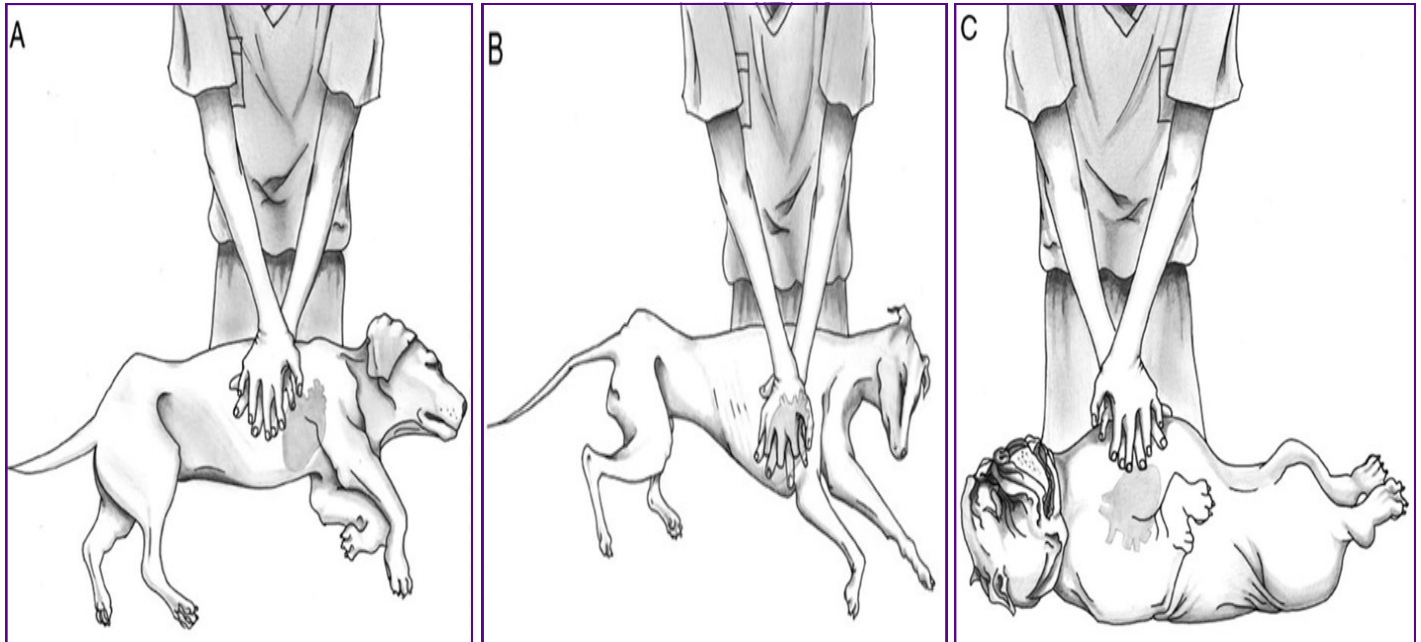
1. **Lay the dog on a flat surface and extend the head back to create an airway.** (Current practices recommend laying the dog on his/her right side (heart facing up), however the latest recommended guidelines state that either the left or right lateral recumbency are acceptable.)
 2. **Open the jaws to check for obstructions, and if any exist and are not easily removed, try to dislodge the object.**
 3. **Cup your hands around the muzzle of the dog's mouth so that only the nostrils are clear.** Blow air into the nostrils with five or six quick breaths, again, depending on the size of the dog. Small dogs and puppies and require short and shallow breaths. Larger dogs need longer and deeper breaths. Continue the quick breaths at a rate of one breath every three seconds or 20 breaths per minute.
 4. **Check for a heartbeat by using your finger on the inside of the thigh, just above the knee.** If you don't feel a pulse, put your hand over the dog's chest cavity where the elbow touches the middle of the chest. If you still don't find a pulse, have one person continue breathing into the nostrils (mouth to snout), while another gives chest compressions / cardiac massage. If you are alone, do the compression and mouth-to-snout ventilation yourself.
 5. **Give the dog chest compressions (cardiac massage) by placing both hands palms down on the chest cavity of the dog.** For most dogs, chest compressions can be performed on the widest part of the chest while the dog is lying on his side.
 - For dogs with **keel-shaped chests** (i.e. deep, narrow chests) in breeds such as greyhounds push down closer to the dog's armpit, directly over the heart.
 - For dogs with **barrel-chested dogs** like English bulldogs lay the dog on its back and compress on the sternum (directly over the heart), like people.
 - For **smaller dogs and cats** chest-compressions can be done with one hand wrapped around the sternum, encircling the heart or two-handed on the ribs.
 - For **large dogs**, place your hands on top of each other.
 - For **tiny dogs or puppies**, place one hand or thumb on the chest.
- Use the heel of your hand(s) to push down for 30 quick compressions followed by 2 breaths of air (ventilation) and then check to see if consciousness has been restored. If consciousness has not been restored, continue the compressions in cycles of 100 to 120 chest compressions per minute (the same rhythm administered for people).
- **Perform CPR in 2-minute cycles** checking to see if breathing and consciousness has been restored.

Ideally, CPR is performed while on route to emergency veterinarian care. If this is not possible, contact a veterinarian

once the dog has started breathing.

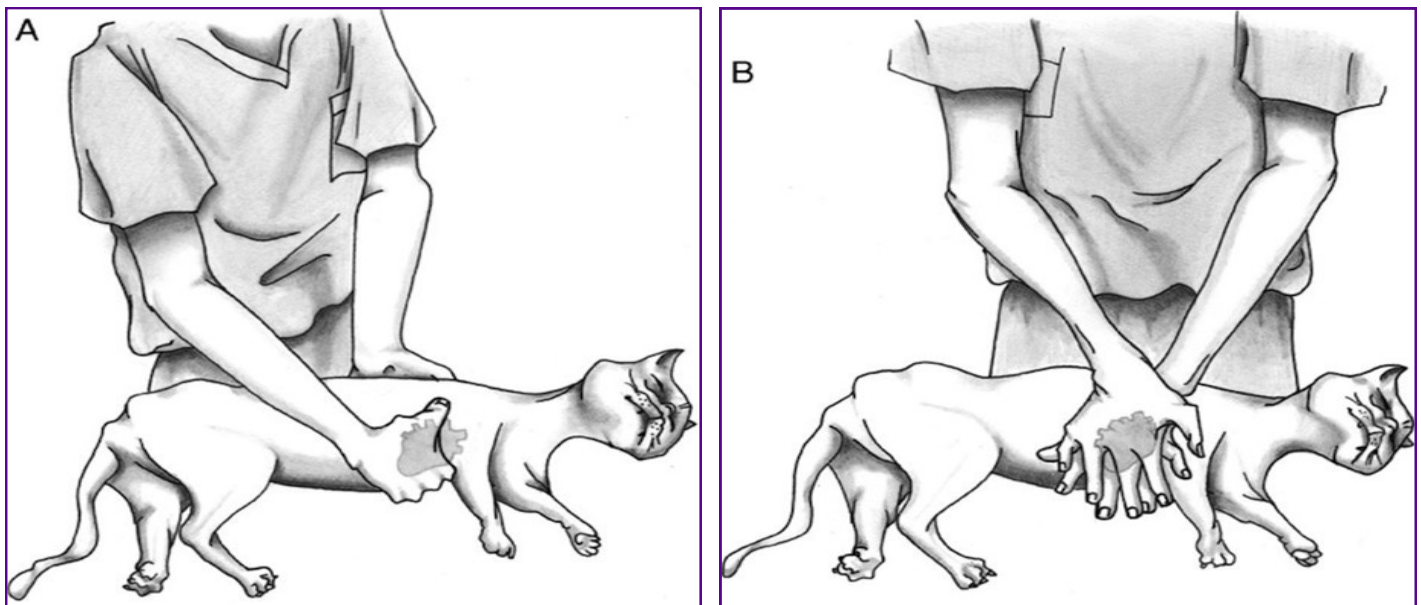
The following diagrams illustrates how to perform chest compressions on dogs with different chest types.

- * Figure (A) illustrates the technique for most dogs. You can apply chest compressions to the widest part of the chest while the dog lies on its side.
- * Figure (B) illustrates the technique for dogs with keel-shaped chests.
- * Figure (C) illustrates the technique for dogs with barrel-shaped chests.



For small dogs and cats chest compressions can be administered two ways:

- * Figure (A) illustrates wrapping one hand around the sternum while supporting the back.
- * Figure (B) illustrates two-handed compression.



Upcoming Events

Vallejo Gem & Mineral Spring Bling

Solano County Fairgrounds
McCormack Hall
900 Fairgrounds Dr
Vallejo, CA

Saturday, February 28 & Sunday, March 1
10:00—5:00
Custom Stone/Crystal Healing Jewelry

Wings of Wonder Healing Expo

Hyatt House Hotel
11269 Point East Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA
Saturday, March 7

11:00—5:00
Animal Communication and Custom Stone/
Crystal Healing Jewelry

Healing Arts Festival

Sacramento Scottish Rite Masonic Center
6151 H St
Sacramento, CA
Sunday, March 8

10:00—5:00
Animal Communication and Custom Stone/
Crystal Healing Jewelry

Reno Spiritual & Wellness Expo

Reno-Sparks Convention Center
4590 South Virginia St
Reno, NV

Saturday, March 28 & Sunday, March 29
9:30—7:00 & 9:30—6:00
Animal Communication and Custom Stone/
Crystal Healing Jewelry



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person or remotely.