



# PET PAGES

Official Yellow Pages for Animal Lovers

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Ad Number 11

Pet Pages – For the South West Florida Edition

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## Separation Anxiety When COVID is Over & You Return to Work

Both dogs and cats live by routines. They feel the most secure and happy when you wake up at the same time every day, feed them at the same time daily, and keep walks or play time on schedule. When the schedule changes, it can cause some stress in our pets.

### Signs of Anxiety in Pets

Some dogs show signs of anxiety - pacing, whining, or even house soiling. These are just a few symptoms of separation anxiety. Cats may meow more, avoid using the litter box, or have more spats with other cats. You can't keep everyone home, so how do we help these pets?

Firstly, maintain the feeding, play & exercise routines for your pets as you return to work away from home. Don't let the business of life cause you to skip walks, play times or vary the feeding time. Routines are the basis for all anxiety management for both dogs and cats.

Secondly, tell your vet about anything you see that is out of the ordinary. Underlying health problems can exacerbate the stress your pet feels.

### At-home Solutions for Anxiety

If your pet is repeatedly licking, house soiling, drooling, or refusing to do the things he loves, it is highly due to anxiety. This pet needs good things happening around all the signs that one is leaving and possibly medication or natural

calmatives to help the brain stay calm. A dog who is so upset that he cannot stop pacing likely needs medication to break through the behavior so they can focus on a food puzzle while you're gone. Then, they make a positive connection, learning your absence is nothing to be anxious about. Medications are not permanently given. Often, pets taper down, or are weaned off, as separation anxiety reduces.

Watch for the signs of anxiety in your pet and what is happening at that time. Is this the day you are in your work clothes? Then, offer food treats as you dress. Is it the travel mug you use for work? If so, leave that out and toss food whenever your pet sees it. These are triggers for the separation anxiety.

If there are a number of things upsetting your dog, hide the worst ones as you counter-condition against the milder ones. Too many triggers always present is a leading reason the training is not working. Consult with a pet trainer specializing in behavior management or a veterinary behaviorist to help determine the product and specific behavior plan that would help your pet the most.

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