



## Calming an Anxious Dog

Because there are so many causes and so many contributors to stress in dogs, there are many varied ways of alleviating it. From changes as simple as an adjustment in diet to as complex as finding the most effective anti-anxiety medication, knowing the right course of action isn't easy, but here are some avenues to investigate.

### Diet

There is much truth to the tenet: "You are what you eat". Dogs need to be on a high-quality diet for their best physical, behavioral, and emotional health. Many dogs thrive on a raw diet, but if you'd prefer using a dry food:

- Look for foods that have a meat source (e.g. "chick-en") *first* in the ingredient list.
- Because a whole meat (e.g. "chicken") contains a lot of water, it's ideal if the second or third ingredient in the list is a specific meat *meal* (e.g. "turkey meal"). If the only other animal protein is much later in the list, it does *not* actually contain much animal protein.

- Avoid foods that contain by-products (either specific or general) early in the ingredient list.
- And avoid corn at all costs! Corn is a simple sugar, which no dog needs. Some dogs fairly vibrate when there's corn in their diet.



*Nibbles hiding*

### Exercise

Another much loved tenet is: "A tired dog is a good dog." No doubt you know from your own experience that physical exercise is a great stress reliever, so include exercise in your dog's daily routine. The morning is especially important for a dog who is going to be spending the day alone while you're at work. Even during the dog days of summer, there are

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### Introductory Training Offer

Get an extra 30 minutes of training when you purchase a 4-session training package.

(Offer details based on location.)

Call **WOOFGANG** at **646.345.5116** to make an appointment.

### Predatory Drift

A serious concern inherent in size disparities between dogs (or between a dog and a cat) is that of predatory drift, in which the smaller animal moves or vocalizes in a prey-like way that triggers a sudden predatory response from the larger dog or a group of dogs. It can be a recipe for potentially deadly disaster that does not go away with time.

Call **WOOFGANG** at **646.345.5116** for help with your prey-driven dog or with building harmony in your multi-animal household.

### About the Trainer

Dog trainer **LAURA GARBER**, CPDT-KA, is a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and is certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), the first national certification for dog trainers.

Laura has authored articles about dogs and dog behavior in dog-centric magazines and on-line resources.

Laura believes strongly in strengthening the bond between human and companion animal. For this reason, she regards training as an exercise in building relationship rather than obedience. Such an approach promises greater understanding and symbiosis within our family packs.

Log on to [www.myWoofGang.com](http://www.myWoofGang.com).

### Did you know...

Every interaction you have with your dog results in his learning something, whether you intentionally meant to train him *or not!* In a young dog, this is especially significant, since he has less of a history with you and so each interaction has a greater impact.

Call **WOOFGANG** at **646.345.5116** for help teaching your pup *the right stuff!*

## Calming an Anxious Dog (cont.)

indoor exercises you can do to stretch and strengthen your dog. Check with your vet about how much exercise is appropriate for your dog.

### Play

Anxiety and playful feelings cannot exist in the same organism at the same time, so if you can elicit playful behavior from your dog in what might be an otherwise stressful situation, you can reframe that situation. For instance, some dogs are concerned about car rides, but if you can begin to associate their favorite game of fetch with tennis balls, first near the car, then perhaps through the back seats of the car, then in one open back seat and out again, etc, gradually increasing the stimulus of the experience of a car ride, you can decrease the anxiety associated with it. This is called desensitization and counter-conditioning.

### Mental Stimulation

One reason there is such a prevalence of behavior problems in pet dogs is that they have so little mental challenge; they need to have work to do! Providing them mental calisthenics through *training* and by using *puzzle toys* (such as the Kong toy) can be a great way to employ our dogs.

### Supplementation

There are several alternative and holistic approaches that can relieve a stressed dog:

- **Bach Flower Remedies**, and particularly **Rescue Remedy**, can help a dog to relax and be more at ease.
- **Dog Appeasing Pheromone, or DAP**, is a synthetically produced pheromone that mimics the “appeasing” pheromones secreted by nursing mother dogs, communicating comfort to her pups. Plug a DAP diffuser near the crate or wherever your dog spends the most time.

- **Tryptophan** is an amino acid precursor to serotonin, the “happy” neurotransmitter that elevates mood. To increase tryptophan in the diet, feed a mixture of brown rice and cooked carrots to your dog two hours after a meal. Alternatively, you can use a tryptophan supplement such as ProQuiet.
- **Omega 3 fatty acids** have been shown to elevate mood and decrease anxiety in humans. Omega 3s are also great for the health of coat and skin. When introducing this to the diet, start at half the suggested daily dosage and work up gradually (sudden introduction can cause diarrhea).

### Final Thoughts

It might go without saying but it doesn't hurt to be explicit: If there's something in your dog's environment that is causing stress, do what you can to eliminate it if possible. For instance, if, while you're at work, street noise is making him anxious, then have him spend his time in a room that is quieter and away from noisy windows. If your younger dog is “dogging” your older one, make sure he has plenty of time to himself to relax unbothered and also set aside time to devote some of your own personal attention to him away from the young whippersnapper.

Also remember that the use of punishment only tends to increase anxiety in an anxious dog. Using positive techniques when training and doing behavior modification will help build confidence in a dog who lacks it.

For this article in its entirety, log on to [www.myWoofGang.com](http://www.myWoofGang.com).



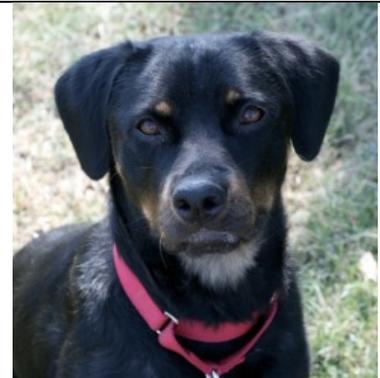
## Ask Woofie...

**WOOFIE**, what do we do if our 3month-old Westie puppy starts barking when returning him to the crate in the middle of the night after pottyng? Is there a way to discourage it besides riding it out? We don't want to disturb our neighbors who are sleeping directly above and below us. Thanks! Elaine

**Hiya, Elaine!** Try waking him and taking him out for a night-time potty break preemptively, rather than his waking up and telling you when he has to go. That way you're taking him out when he's groggy, not when he's wide awake. Ideally you don't want to reinforce barking, though in the middle of the night you've gotta do what you've gotta do. Also make sure that he's getting enough exercise and mental stimulation (through training) before bedtime and hopefully he'll be tired enough to last the night.

Hope that helps! Happy training!

**WOOFIE**



*Shy Sadie is a young Rottweiler mix. Though a bit fearful of strangers, and particularly of men, once familiar with someone, she is affectionate and playful, seeking their contact and attention. She yearns for the great outdoors and loves to wriggle on her back in the cool grasses. This affectionate, curious girl will make a great hiking companion for a dog-experienced adult family. Sadie is at the Liberty Humane Society waiting for her forever family.*