



# The WoofGang Wag Rag



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Free

## Home Alone

In the wild, a lone dog has little chance of survival. It is in increased danger from other predators; it has little chance of success at the hunt. It's a wonder that a species as dependent on the pack as the dog can adapt to being alone at all!

It has been observed in wild dogs that the mother dog will periodically move from one den to another. She will move the pups one at a time, choosing a different one each time to be left alone in the new den or in the previous den. In so doing, she is teaching her pups to have a tolerance to being alone.

Good breeders do the same thing, leaving puppies alone for short periods of time after their eyes have opened and they can respond to sounds. This way the pups will learn that they will be alone only for a short period before their human or canine parent returns. Without this early learning, a puppy can become too dependent on the presence of others.



Sasha in her crate

## Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is a serious emotional state in which a dog becomes anxious and panicked when his owner is absent. The physical manifestations of it have been compared to a panic attack in humans.

Typical symptoms are vocalization, destructive behavior or self-mutilation, physical manifestations (panting, drooling, sweaty paw pads, dilated pupils, trembling), breaking of houstraining, and anorexic behavior. The anxiety begins to build during the owner's departure ritual and the symptoms occur within the first minutes after departure.

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## About the Trainer

Dog trainer **Laura Garber**, CPDT, 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).



## \$25 Intro Training Offer

Get a 30-minute introductory basic training session for \$25 or apply it towards a 4-session package and get the 30-minute session FREE! (Offer details based on location.) Call **WoofGang** at 646.345.5116 to make an appointment.

## Quit Pulling!

Dogs find the act of pulling against their leashes rewarding. It's just their natural instinct. If your dog is a strong puller, using either the Easy Walk® harness or the Gentle Leader® head collar might help.

Call **WoofGang** at 646.345.5116 for help training your dog to loose-leash walk.

## Growing the Bonds

Our pets have become members of the family, working, playing, eating, and sleeping at our sides.

**WoofGang** can help you strengthen the bond with your canine family member. Call 646.345.5116 today!

## Hide and Seek

One way to burn off some mental energy is to find games that are specifically suited to your dog's breed. This one is just like you played as a kid... put your dog in a sit-stay, then go off and hide. Call her name and let her sniff you out!

**WoofGang** can give you other fun ways of burning your dog's mental steam. Call 646.345.5116 today!

### ***Home Alone (cont.)***

Shelter dogs are at an increased risk for developing separation anxiety. They have had bonded relationships with humans in the past which have been severed and so they may likely bond more strongly in subsequent human relationships. In addition, it may have been the animal's separation anxiety that brought about her surrender to the shelter in the first place. While any dog can conceivably develop separation anxiety, it occurs more frequently with dogs who are particularly affiliative toward humans – “soft”, bondy dogs.

### ***Hyper-Attachment***

Dog fanciers and trainers alike are guilty of over-diagnosing separation anxiety in dogs who express separation sensitivity. Separation anxiety is a clinical term that should be strictly reserved for the serious state of panic.

Instead, I like to use the term *hyper-attachment* to label a constellation of behaviors typified by: constant following in the home, exaggerated excitement upon return after even a short absence, heightened anxiety when separated from the human family in environments away from home, anxious behavior when the dog is positioned so she can watch departure from the home, etc.

Often such dogs are perfectly fine when their lives are routinized but they get overly anxious with change. So, should there be a need to vary your dog's routine, such as leaving her at another family member's house on occasion, steps should be taken to increase her comfort

in this new context. Separation anxiety treatment protocols can be employed to build tolerance to aloneness in different situations.

Be aware that hyper-attachment, left unresolved, can develop into the more serious condition of separation anxiety.

### ***The Use of Medication in Treating Separation Anxiety***

For dogs who are extremely anxious, it may be necessary to get a prescription for an anti-anxiety medication such as Clomicalm from your vet. When used in tandem with behavior modification protocols, it can take the edge off the anxiety enough to allow the dog to actually accept the positive experiences she's having during the treatment. Often the dog can be weaned off the medication after treatment is successful.

### ***Owner-Absent Misbehaviors***

Owner-absent misbehaviors like barking or destruction are frequently attributed to separation anxiety, when it is really just that the dog isn't getting enough exercise or hasn't been properly educated in acceptable alternative outlets for normal dog behavior. It is important to accurately diagnose your dog's problem before commencing treatment.

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

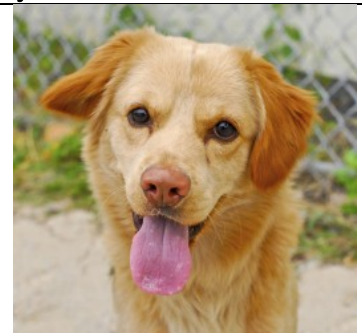


### ***Ask Woofie...***

*Woofie, my dog Mojo likes to jump up. Sometimes it's playful, attention-grabbing, but other times he is a little more resistant and it seems like he wants to wrestle. In this case, nothing is really working to get him to stop. He jumps more powerfully and he nips and really doesn't back down. I notice that in the morning when my roommates are leaving for work he is jumping and biting their bags or whatever is hanging from them. What should we do? Tamer*

*Hiya, Tamer! Start by keeping the leash on him. A time-out is a good way to deal with it, but it's reactive, not proactive. Be proactive when you can predict that it might happen so that you get his energy working in the right direction before his behavior goes south. At the times he typically jumps, stand on his leash so that he is prevented from jumping up and repeating the bad behavior. Instead engage him in another activity, like a down-stay, so that you're shaping a different behavior during those times of high excitement. Hope it helps!*

### ***Woofie***



*Creamy is an energetic, affectionate boy who loves attention and cuddling. He's strongly motivated to work and learn for the people he loves, which is just about everyone! Creamy is waiting at the Liberty Humane Society for his adult-only forever home!*