

Information for the New Boxer Owner

Rockin' "P" Rescue would like to thank you for letting us help you find the right boxer for your home. We would like to help with the transition by giving you this additional information on the boxer breed and rescue dogs. We are an organization that is run entirely by volunteers and donations. We truly love the boxer breed and want to help educate those around us about this magnificent breed. After reading this if you still have further questions please don't hesitate to call. Thank you again, Rockin' "P" Rescue, Inc.

Is a Boxer the right dog for You and your family?

Many people decide to adopt a Boxer because they like the "look" of it. There are many things to consider before choosing a dog that is right for you. Here are some facts that you may or may not know about the boxer breed. We hope that this will help to make sure you have chosen the right breed for your life style.

- Boxers are "pack" animals. They are happiest when considered a part of the family or if they have another canine friend to keep them company. They do not do well on their own. A boxer's temperament will be ruined if placed in the back yard and ignored for long periods of the time. If you have a very busy life and won't be around much for your dog, then we suggest you look at acquiring a more independent breed. If you have any doubts think about all the whining, barking, clawing dogs you have seen tied up alone outside. Dogs trying desperately to get their family's attention, and then just giving up to become hyperactive, listless, fearful, or vicious when the stress of being alone becomes too much to cope with.
- Boxers do not tolerate extreme cold well. They have little body fat & very short, fine hair. If you are cold enough to put a heater on, then your Boxer will need one also. If you are not prepared to let your dog sleep indoors during cold weather, then you may want to choose a longhaired breed that is more adaptable to cold weather.
- Boxers do not tolerate extreme heat well. They have short noses and barrel chests so extreme heat and humidity make it hard for them to breath. To help cool their bodies down dogs will pant. They do not have the same sweat glands as humans so they pant to help cool their bodies down. If a dog is panting heavily then you need to take measures to cool the dog down. If it is too hot outside for you then in return it is too hot for them.
- Boxers of all ages love to dig. Boxers and beautifully manicured lawns, or landscaped gardens just don't go hand in hand. If you want to keep a Boxer and have a beautiful garden, then you will need to fence off an area. If this is not possible, you are going to have to spend a lot of time and have a lot of patience with training.
- Boxers need exercise. They are most suited to households with a large yard, perhaps some children to play with, or another dog, or an owner who is prepared to take them out for plenty of daily exercise.
- Boxers, despite their appearance, are not fierce or macho. They are, however, loyal & discerning and do well in a fight if one can't be avoided. If you want a guard dog, instead of a companion, we recommend you pick a different breed.
- Boxers are exuberant and lively. Very small children and the elderly & frail can be easily knocked over by the enthusiastic antics of a Boxer. However a Boxer that has been brought up with the young or elderly, will usually be very mindful of these situations.
- All dogs at times will be destructive and Boxers are no exception. In fact, they are late to mature and can be destructive until they are about 12 months. They are not considered adults until around 2 years old and some never grow up. Crate training is a sensible approach to this. A Boxer can be kept indoors but can be safe and will give you peace of mind while you are away.

- We believe that Boxers are one of the most enjoyable breeds around. They are loyal, loving, and funny and have a wonderful sense of humor. But they are not for everyone. If your home is your pride and joy and muddy paw prints don't go with your décor then a less enthusiastic breed might be more suitable.

Getting ready for your new “rescue” dog’s arrival

- Get appropriate size collar and leash
- ID tag: with name, new address, and telephone number
- A crate (either metal or plastic-Varikennel) is suggested to start
- A mat or pillow for inside the crate
- Dog seat belt for the car or truck
- Comfortable dog bed or blanket to sleep on
- Food and water dish
- Premium dog food – such as: Purina One, IAMS, Eukanuba, or Nutro
- Premium dog treats
- Dog Toys – squeaky toys, fleece toys, and a kong is a must for stuffing with goodies.
- Chewies and Bones – Dogs naturally have an urge to chew. Stay away from rawhide (can cause choking or intestinal blockage if swallowed in large chunks). Pig ears are high in fat content and booda bones are plastic and can lodge in intestines. Pressed rawhide, kongs and nylabones are great alternatives and last a long time!
- Nail clippers or dremel tool – it is very important to keep nails trimmed
- Dog Shampoo
- Name and number of your veterinarian
- Name and number of obedience instructor

What to expect from a rescue dog!!!

Don't expect that things will fall into place within the first few hours that you bring a dog home, especially if you have one dog already. The dog in your home may like having dogs over to play, but it will be different when they realize they are there to stay. Be patient! If things get really heated, separate the dogs with something like a baby gate. Allow them to see each other and smell each other without having them on top of each other. What we usually see is that the rescue dog is behaving and the resident dog is having a temper tantrum. We ask that you give it time, at least a few days before making any long-term decisions. It might even take longer than that before things go smoothly. Remember that there may always be a few spats. This happens even with dogs that were raised together.

When making first introductions, we recommend that you meet away from the house on neutral ground. Have someone walk one dog and you walk the other. Walk side-by-side letting the dogs get a glimpse of each other. When entering the house, take the resident dog in first and then the new one. Crate the new dog. They can smell and see each other without being in each others' face. Leave the rescue crated for an hour or so and they can watch the household routine but not be intimidated. Let the new dog out of the crate without a big fuss. Go about your business. If the dogs do scuffle do not attempt to grab the collar because the dog may react instinctively and possibly snap at you.

Don't expect that the dog or cat in your home is going to be best buddies with your new dog instantly. They may have a few scuffles, but as long as there is no bloodshed, let them work it out between them. They are trying to determine who will be in charge. This may be hard for you to watch, but this is natural for them to do. Let them work it out. Once they have established which one of them is the boss then you need to go along with it. It may not always be the first dog in the home.

Accidents will happen especially in a new environment. Treat your new rescue like a puppy. Take them out after mealtime and make sure that they pee and poop before returning inside. Don't expect your dog to know how to behave in your home automatically. When you leave, crate your dog. This will be best for the safety of your rescue and your peace of mind.

If your new rescue dog behaves in a manner that is inappropriate or that you would not allow your current dog to do, let them know in a loving manner that this is unacceptable behavior. Don't let these things slide or it will be harder to correct the longer it goes uncorrected.

Don't play tug of war games with your dog. The second you let go, they have won and this may signal the beginning of some dominance problems in your household, especially with those dogs with dominant personalities. Never let a dog straddle or hover over you or your children...this is a very dominant position and you want to be the Alpha in your household.

***** If a dog becomes aggressive, all RPR Caretakers must have a suitable place to put the dog, incase no one can pick it up right away.

Realize that it may take a good month before having your new dog in your home feels comfortable and several months before it feels normal. Give it time and don't demand too much of your dog too soon. Introducing your new rescue dog to friends and family needs to wait a few weeks because of the stress on the dog. Time and patience will result in a good dog. Just go slow...we don't always know the histories of these dogs. Always be cautious.

Nutrition

Feed your Boxer premium dog food and they will feel better and look healthier. Examples are: Canidae, California Natural, Wellness, Solid Gold and Nutro. If you decide to change brands of dog food please do so gradually so as not to upset their stomachs. Also, some recommend feeding your Boxers out of elevated bowls to help prevent or minimize the chance of Bloat. Elevated bowls are especially good if you have a long legged Boxer.

Grooming

Boxers do not need a lot of grooming. However, a quick daily brush will keep their coat glossy and minimize the amount of dog hair shed in the house. A face washing with a damp cloth after each meal is a must because of the deep folds in their faces. A healthy Boxer does not smell but the occasional bath using a mild shampoo will keep him fresh and clean. Toenails need to be clipped every few weeks and ears will need to be gently wiped out with a damp cloth or cotton ball. The occasional teeth brushing will keep their breath smelling better!!

Preventive Medicines

It is a requirement that your rescue dog is treated for the prevention of heartworm on a monthly regime. Mosquitoes carry the heartworm larvae. Heartworm is a real killer and you must not underestimate the importance of a good heart worming program. We have all the dogs checked and started on HW prevention before placing them. If the dogs are HW+ then they have heartworm treatment prior to placement, get a clean bill of health and started on prevention. We use Heartgard or Interceptor, which can be obtained from your vet. Thus HW prevention, also takes care of round and hook worms. The cost of 6 months of heartworm prevention cost about \$25.00 and the cost of heartworm treatment starts at \$250.00. It is best to use prevention. For the treatment of fleas and ticks we use Frontline and have had excellent results. Frontline may seem a bit more expensive but in the long run it's not. By the time you buy the over the counter top spot, flea collar, flea shampoo, tick dip...etc. You can buy Frontline and not have to worry with the rest. Not even flea collars.

Do not forget the annual rabies, dhlp, and exam!!!

Children

Most children love dogs and most dogs love children, especially Boxers. There are a few points to remember though. Dogs bite by instinct. Some rescues or any dog will bite when played with too roughly. Do not let your children push, shove, ride, or lay on the dogs. Children often don't realize that they are being too rough until it is too late and they are bitten and then the dogs are blamed. For the sake of your child and your dog, remember that they should play together under close supervision.

This insert is from an article written by another rescue group—
“Kid proof your dogs; Dog proof your kids!!!”

High-pitched laughter peeling behind her, Nancy ran around the corner of the house smack dab into the dog chained by the garage. Unnerved by the noise and startled by the child, the dog lunged and bit Nancy on the nose. She screamed, and the dog bit again. Nancy ended up with several stitches in her face and nightmares; the dog was euthanized for biting; and both families were traumatized.

The tragedy could have been avoided if Nancy's folks and the dog's owners had been prepared.

First of all, a dog should never be chained outside unattended. Most dogs of guard or working heritage suffer personality quirks when tied and many become downright aggressive. Dogs are better off in fenced areas, where they can see the barrier between them and the world, where they can feel somewhat safe from noisy, frolicking children. In addition, many dogs instinctively equate the high-pitched sounds of children with the distress sounds of prey animals, and they react by biting the child as they would have bitten the prey animal in the wild.

Second, children should be taught how to behave around dogs, even if their own family does not own a dog. For example, a child should never approach a strange dog without asking the owner if it's OK to pat the dog. If the child sees a loose dog on the street, he should not approach it even if he knows the dog belongs to his friend. He should tell someone that he saw the dog, but should make no attempt to pat or grab it. Nor should he scream or run away, for these actions can result in an attack by the dog. A running “being” frequently says “prey” to the dog and triggers the chase response in his brain. Once triggered, this response is almost impossible to interrupt. The dog is reacting to chemical stimulus, not rational thought, and is extremely difficult to sidetrack.

Most dogs, even those that are well-trained, do not consider children as figures of authority. Furthermore, since children frequently stare intently at animals, a dog may feel threatened by this short person who is trying to catch him. Even the best-natured dog may bite to protect himself in these circumstances, especially if he feels cornered.

Once a child is given permission to approach a dog, she should present her closed fist for the dog to sniff. This protects the fingers in case the dog is frightened and tries to nip.

Children should never hug a dog that is not their own, and should only hug their own dog very gently if the dog can tolerate the hug. Children should be taught to never hit dogs with their hands or an object, to lower their voices when playing with the dog, to leave the dog alone when he's sleeping, eating, or ill, and to never tease a dog in any fashion. Many dog bites occur because the child teases the pet beyond endurance.

Dog owners share the responsibility for bite prevention as well. They should socialize their puppies to small children at an early age. (It helps to buy from a breeder who has started this socialization prior to the puppy purchase, for the younger the puppy is exposed to gentle children, the more tolerant of children it will become.)

Socialization can be as simple as walking the dog near a playground where children are making noise, running about, playing ball or Frisbee or soccer or walking through the neighborhood while the kids wait for the school bus. The dog can be told to walk at heel through a crowd of children, to sit-stay and watch the play or allow the children to pet his head, to down-stay until the end of the game. Constant exposure of this type will accustom the dog to the presence and antics of children.

The dog should never be left alone with a child less than five years of age. A young child may challenge or injure the dog unintentionally and the result could be tragic. Dogs and children should be separated at snack time so the dog doesn't learn to steal food from tiny hands. The dog should have a place he can call his own, a retreat, a private room, or den. This can be a pen in the back yard or a crate in the house. The children should never be allowed to bother the dog when he is in his place. If the dog has access to a fenced yard, owners should make sure that neighborhood children can not accidentally or intentionally tease him. Kids often begin by goading the dog to bark, then to snarl. Or they may throw things at him to chase him away from the fence. However it begins, the end result is usually the same: the kids learn that teasing the dog gives them a feeling of power tinged with the possibility of danger and the dog learns to hate kids. This hatred may be manifest as fear or as aggression, and may end when a child is bitten and the dog is taken to the pound to be placed in a new home, (if lucky). If the dog does not like the children, the children must change their behavior. Most dogs are wary of staring, of quick movements, and of high-pitched screams, all of which are typical of small children.

Here are a few hints to alleviate the tension between dog and children. Provide a crate where the dog can escape the attention of boisterous or over-zealous children. Teach children to leave Ranger alone when he's in the crate, to pat him gently--no squeezing around the neck, please--and to leave him alone while he's eating. Do not play tug-of-war with any dog that has access to children. A dog that learns to tug on any item will soon figure that anything he can grab is his, even if it's a child's toy, clothing, or appendage. Teach children not to run past the dog and scream, for this can excite the dog and lead to dominant and even aggressive behavior. Never tie a dog in the yard. Children tend to tease tethered dogs even without realizing it, which can lead to aggressive behavior. Many instances of dogs attacking children occur when the dog is tethered in the yard and a screaming or running child enters its space. The sight of a child and a dog napping together on the sofa or the floor, playing in the yard, or contemplating the sunset is a wondrous thing. The potential relationship between a child and the dog that considers himself the family guardian is precious, and it needs to be nurtured and guided. Families can accomplish this by teaching the dog and the child to respect and cherish each other. If this can be done, fewer children will be bitten and fewer dogs will be euthanized for aggressive behavior.

Written by Vicki DeGruy

Discipline

All dogs require some degree of discipline if they are to take their place as a happy, useful member of the household. Everyone has their own methods of training but the main thing to remember is patience. If your dog doesn't respond to you right away it doesn't mean they are stubborn or stupid but that they don't understand what you want. No matter how frustrated you get, NEVER beat him (not even with a rolled up newspaper). You will only terrify and confuse him. Once you have destroyed the respect and trust of your Boxer, you will never regain the bond that existed between you. Boxers are usually sensitive to your moods, so a disapproving tone of voice and a firm "NO" when he does something that you don't like is usually enough. Give plenty of praise and cuddles when he does the right thing. Boxers are so eager to please!! Remember that we do not know the history of these rescue dogs. Use precaution when using any type of discipline. We highly recommend obedience training. You can find classes at your local

PetSmart. RPR has an obedience trainer consultant if you are in this area and would like information on her classes.

HOT WEATHER TIPS FOR BOXERS (AND THEIR OWNERS)

First of all, you might ask your vet in your area if they have any specific recommendations to help prevent your Boxer from the effects of heat stress.

As we know, people 'sweat' as their form of respiration (cooling off), and may breathe more heavily.

Dogs do not have the same kind of sweat glands. They PANT, and they have some sweat glands on the bottoms of their paws, but that's it. Brachycephalic dogs, like Boxers, have a shorter nose, and often, additional flesh inside their mouth and throat which makes their respiration less efficient. In other words, Boxers overheat more quickly than many other breeds of dogs, and this is very important to bear in mind. Weather that might not be too hot for another dog, MIGHT be too hot for your Boxer. High humidity may make it harder for your Boxer to cool off, too.

So, how can you get your Boxer safely through hot and humid weather?

- 1.) Lots and lots of cool, fresh drinking water, available at all times for the dog, in the house or in the yard. If the weather is hot, and your Boxer is digging, it might be due to heat stress. This is an important time to help your Boxer cool off NOW! A child's wading pool filled with water is a great idea for many Boxers.
- 2.) A place to cool off. A dark, quiet place with a fan, drinking water, a cool mat to lie on, or again, the child's wading pool in the yard. You can buy a 'cool mat' from most pet supply places or you can make one from wet towels.
- 3.) A 'wet coat.' Again, you can buy these at dog shows or from pet supply catalogs, but you can make one from a wet terrycloth towel or a chamois. Place the wet, wrung out 'wet coat' over the dog.
- 4.) NEVER leave your Boxer unattended in a car, truck or backyard. Especially without water and/or shade. Even on cloudy days, the temperature can rise quickly in a closed car. And even on cloudy days, the humidity can be too much for your Boxer.

We hope this has answered most of your questions! If you still need more advice don't hesitate to call at (256) 435-3849. A special "Thank you" to all that contributed to the information for this handout: Rockin' "P" Rescue members, Lois Brooks, Caraline McLeod (Hawkleigh Boxers, Australia) and Karla Spitzer. And a big Thank you for taking this boxer into your home and heart!!

Do's and Don'ts for Rescue Dogs

DO NOT EXPECT TOO MUCH TOO SOON

A dog that has been in rescue has been kenneled a lot, crated a lot and generally confined. He is also coming into a new situation where he doesn't know who to trust. This is extremely stressful and the dog will show his stress by either being hyper, more aggressive than usual, or acting very timid, or panting a lot, pacing a lot and generally being wiggled out. The first night the dog may be extremely restless. Do not expect the dog to be perfectly behaved the first day he is with you. Do not think his behavior the first couple of days with you is the way he will be forever. Typically you will not see your dog's true behavior for several days or even a week.

DO NOT PLAY ROUGH WITH A NEW RESCUE

Many rescue dogs may have been abused. It is not wise to put your face too close to your dog's face for a long time. It is not wise to slap at the dog's face to play or to pull jowls, or wrestle with him on the ground. Boxers are too big- they will end up jumping on everyone wanting to play. You maybe like it but your Mother or grandkids will not.

Do not startle a new rescue, try instead to keep him calm and give him lots of petting and love. Avoid loud noises or public places- the first weeks should be for the dog to bond in your home with your family....which is totally new and different to the dog. Don't add more stress by taking him to a public event or coffeehouse the first month!

DO NOT RUSH INTRODUCTIONS TO YOUR OTHER DOGS OR PETS

If you have other dogs or pets, remember that slow introductions are best, especially if your dog is really wound up. Then it would be best to keep the two separate for several days. Let them sniff between a screen door, or crate. If there is aggression correct it. Introduce them in a neutral territory if possible, or by taking them both on a walk around the block and then putting them in the yard off-lead. Dogs are much less aggressive off lead than on. If you are nervous , keep the garden hose on and handy. Be prepared- have 2 people present - each one there to pull one dog out of the fight by the hind legs or (be careful) collar. If you grab the collar get the dog up on his hind legs where he is helpless. If your dogs do go at it does not mean they will never get along. Many rescues are so scared for a week they won't accept another dog and then simply one day they change. This comes with trusting you and knowing they are now safe in a permanent home with reliable caretakers. Then they can give up their fear and settle in.

IF YOU NEED HELP GET IT

If you see bad behaviors coming out in your new rescue- call one of your rescue volunteers immediately. They can offer good information about training, and correcting problems and information sources. DO get a Boxer information book and a dog training book or get information about having a new dog on the web.

DO MAKE SURE YOUR KIDS ARE “DOG SAAVY”

No getting near the dog when he eats, chews on a bone, or a toy. No tug of war. No offering food- big dogs can inadvertently nip fingers. No roughhousing. No ear-pulling, kicking, sudden moves, screaming or loud noises. Boxers are known to love kids but the kids need to treat them nicely. Some rescues will try to dominate kids to get up on the pecking order. If this is happening get the advice of a dog trainer as it needs to be corrected at once.

DO NOT LEAVE A NEW RESCUE ALONE IN THE BACK YARD

Some rescues turn out to be fence jumpers. Especially if they were separated recently from a home they liked. First the dog must bond with you before being trusted alone in the back yard. Do be absolutely sure your fence is secure. Do perform a test after several weeks by leaving him and observing his actions from a place he can't see you.

ALWAYS TAG YOUR NEW DOG IMMEDIATELY

Your dog needs an ID tag immediately because he is most likely to run away if the opportunity presents at the beginning of the adoption. And also people are then more likely to leave a door open or a gate unlatched not being used to having a dog. Many times a neighbor will find the dog and can easily see you live right around the corner. This saves everyone time and money (If the pound picks him up it is big bucks to get him back.) Also order your city license and rabies tag as soon as possible. We also highly recommend microchipping for permanent ID.

DO USE A CRATE

Save your home, belongings and save yourself some stress by using a crate when you first get a new rescue. Crated he is safe and secure and so is your house. Just do not leave the animal for too long. Overnight is OK but put the crate in your bedroom- dogs are denning animals and want to be part of the pack. To be relegated to another part of the house is like punishment to them.

The crate isn't a life sentence- soon you will be able to trust him all day in your home but he will need to be trained first. We highly recommend dog obedience classes. There are many fine ones locally.

In Your Corner

A list of supplies for a Boxer

FOREVER-HOME

Your boxer will require love, some patience, and possibly a sense of humor on your part. Boxers will repay this love ten-fold in a variety of ways. Here is a list of supplies and approximated prices you may find helpful for assisting your new companion in making his/her transition from a foster family into your home:

For Feeding:

2 or 3 quart Stainless Steel Bowl \$5

Metal bowls are easy to clean/dishwasher safe. They are preferable to plastic or ceramic versions because they are nonporous . . . microscopic germs/bacteria can build-up in little holes/scratches, which could potentially foster a breeding ground for things which may make your dog ill.

A luxury item for feeding is a food stand, a holder for the bowls that is raised about 18 inches from the floor. These help relieve stress/strain on a dog's back and neck muscles and may benefit their digestive abilities. They also can help prevent accidental spilling of food. Different styles are available . . . crafted from metal, wood, or plastic. Prices range from \$15- \$40

For Water:

2 or 3 quart Stainless Steel Bowl \$5
(indoors)

1 ½ Gallon (single dog) to 7 Gallon (multi-dog) Flat-sided bucket. \$7- \$30
(outdoors) Can be made of plastic or stainless steel. The flat side can go up against a chain-link fence or can be attached to a ring bolted to a wooden fence. Fasten the handle with a clip (available at a hardware store for under \$1 to the fence to prevent your dog from spilling the water if left unattended.

Leashes/Collars:

For puppies that are still growing, nylon adjustable collars are the most economical way to go \$2- \$5

For adult dogs, neck sizes for most boxers will range between 18 and 24 inches although variations do occur so measuring before you buy is advised. Buckle collars with some means of identification is advisable even if your dog doesn't go outside without you . . . they are handy to have for car rides, trips to the kennel/vet office. Nylon or leather collars are both durable and practical \$5 and up

For obedience training, consult your class instructor when you register about what they prefer. In general, nylon choke collars are the most widely used and are available in a wide assortment of colors and lengths. Nylon is softer and is less likely to pull your dog's coat when you use it. However, metal collars do offer more pressure against the throat. If you need metal, look for a collar with a hexagon twist rather than little chains linked together to prevent hair-loss during use. Nylon will be less expensive \$3- \$15

A 6-foot leash is a safe and easily managable for most walks with your new boxer at any age. Many obedience class teachers prefer the cotton web style lead for training and may be purchased directly from them at class (otherwise you can get them thru mail order catalogs or pet supply stores for about \$3). Nylon or leather leashes can be purchased to co-ordinate with your dog's collar, if you like. Both are very durable and should last many years; however, when new they can be very stiff and can cause your hands some injury from rough edges or hard tugs from your dog which may cut your skin. Examine carefully for your own safety before purchasing. Prices range from \$4- \$20

Flexi (Retractable) Leashes are available based on how much your dog weighs. The coiled up part is housed inside a plastic shell and is easily held and retracted with one hand ... for most adults. If you are considering this type of leash, **please do not allow children to walk your dog on it** until they learn not to allow the dog get the leash caught up under his legs. The very tough cord that is used in these leashes can cause serious shoulder injuries to your dog ... separation of the joint and muscle tears which can require surgical repair. Most common varieties of this lead extend to 16 ft but 26 and 32 ft versions are available through catalogs and pet supply stores. Prices range from\$15- \$42

Harnesses are a good option to consider if you will be jogging or cycling with your dog. They are generally made of nylon and are adjustable. They fit over the dogs legs and chest and loop around his neck and ribcage with a ring to attach a leash to between the shoulders. Harnesses allow you to keep your dog close without serious life-threatening chokes during a sudden stop. These are often used on dogs who have been rescued from situations where a collar has been imbedded in the skin or tethered to things. About \$15

Crates:

Crate training is a good thing for most boxers. They feel safe in their crate and they are protected from harm while they are in them. Crates are a wonderful aid in housebreaking as well. Most dogs do not want to relieve themselves in a confined space and then have to lie in it ... as long as the dog is permitted outside at regular intervals (2 to 4 hours with pups) most will keep them clean. Dogs are pack animals by nature and generally like having dens of their own. A soft blanket or pad inside is good but should be washable. Folded towels also work well for bedding in them. Comforters can be picked up at yard sales for small amounts and work great. Crates are also the safest way for dogs to travel in cars and the only way airlines will take them. They come in two styles:

Wire style, which fold down to a height of about 4 to 5 inches for storage. And hard plastic style, which come in two pieces (top/bottom) that have to be screwed together. Each style has features which may make them more preferable ... wire is light weight and easy to store, plastic is more durable and easier to clean. The wire allows your dog to get more air and see more of his surroundings but the plastic offers protection from cold and small objects and outside creatures. Decide which suits your need best.

Crates for adult boxers should measure 36 x 23 x 27 or 40 x 27 x 30 as a guideline. Your dog should be able to stand and lie down in the crate comfortably; if they are crouching in it, it is too small.

Shopping around for crates is advisable. Wire crates can range from about \$55 to \$80 new and the Plastic versions go from between \$70 to \$110. Online and mail order pet supply places often have the best deals on crates; however, checking newspapers, stores, fleamarkets, and garage sales can pay off. We recommend if you are purchasing new using the link from our website at www.rockinprescue.org and scroll down to Jeffers Pet link...the rescue receives 8% from all sales and after a great deal of shopping around these are by far the lowest priced. They ship in about 3-4 days. The Midwest fold down crates are what we use: MJ- BB or MJ – BC.

Toys:

Boxers can be hard on toys. They have powerful jaws and strong teeth. Examine toys for toughness/durability before purchasing. Things to notice are: stitching (is it tight/tough), small parts (does it have things like eyes or ears that might come off with tugging that your dog can swallow), squeakers (vinyl toys) for security (choke hazard), is the toy washable?

Here are some toys boxers enjoy:

Rubber Kongs (you can put peanut butter in them and they love it) ... they bounce in unpredictable ways
Balls (tennis balls or rubber for outside) (fuzzy or squeaky for inside) ... check diameter for safety!
Rope toys (bone shaped or figure 8 for tugging)
Fuzzy critters ... animal shapes that make noises

Bones:

Boxers like to gnaw on bones like most dogs. Please be very careful about giving your dogs bones from foods you prepare at home. Poultry and Pork bones are serious hazards to boxers as their jaws are powerful enough to break them up into pieces that they can swallow whole ... these pieces can splinter and lodge inside your dog anywhere along the digestive tract, throat, stomach, intestines ... painful and potentially life-threatening in some cases.

Nylabones are a good alternative to natural bones. They come in several flavors and are quite durable (lasting several months). The Wolf size or larger is advised for adult boxers. If they get dirty in the yard, you can wash them in the sink or dishwasher ... toss in microwave for a minute or two ... good as new.

Natural bones or rawhides available at pet stores should be used with caution. Avoid smoked or flavored varieties to protect your carpeting/furniture from potential stains once the flavor mixes with your dog's saliva. The plain white or blanched varieties are best ... not only for keeping your stuff clean but also tend to harbor less enzymes which may affect your dogs digestion. If you notice your dog is getting loose bowel movements after chewing a bone, take the bone away!

Grooming Aids:

For ears: Baby wipes are excellent for wiping out dirt and keeping the ears clean. You can also use cotton balls and alcohol to clean ears but do not soak the cotton balls ... if they are too wet, they drip the alcohol down into the ear canal which will cause your dog to shake his head and maybe rub his ears (kind of like human "swimmers ear").

For shedding coat: Rubber horse curries work well to remove shedding hair. They come in two colors, red and black. The red ones are generally a little harder. Place the curry on the area you want to work on and move it in a circular motion while applying just a small amount of pressure. The curry will pull the dead coat out but will not hurt your dog. It feels like a massage and most dogs enjoy it. The curry may fill with dead hair, which you can remove with your finger or by banging it against the bottom of your shoe. You should do this over a trashcan as a lot of boxers will try to eat the dead hair, which will give them a stomach ache and may cause them to barf later. Most curries cost about \$5 at pet supply stores.

For nails: Dremels are a great tool for doing nails. They sand the nail down and leave the edges smooth. The cordless models tend to be a lot less noisy and allow you the greatest mobility. You can find them in the hardware section of Wal-Mart or at home supply stores for \$20 to \$25 dollars. You may need to buy the sanding head separately ... they are about \$2-\$3. The little sandpaper disks work the fastest but have to be replaced often (they come in pkgs of 4 to 6). The sanding stone head works well and lasts a long time but does take longer and you need to watch that it doesn't get too hot. There is a link on the RockinPRescue website to a page that gives proper and easy-to-follow instructions for using a dremel to do nails.

If you'd prefer to use a hand-held tool, the scissor style nail snips work very well for boxers. They have strong blades and you clip the nail by fitting it in between the blades and squeezing the handles. These run about \$5 for the really strong ones. You should have some Kwik-Stop on hand to stop any bleeding should you nick the dog's vein inside the nail. Although baking soda or flour will also work.

For bath: Dog formulated shampoo is the best. There are several kinds on the market that you can purchase in either pet supply stores or in catalogues. Dogs do not have pores in their skin like humans. If you must use a human formula, choose something mild like baby shampoo. Other formulas can damage their skin or strip off the oils their coats have that protect it from the sun/water. Conditioners are not normally needed for boxer coats.

Boxers are generally clean dogs and should not require a lot of bathing. Bathing your boxer too often can result in higher dander from soaps drying out his skin and increasing the human potential for allergic reaction. Baths can be very helpful during shedding season for removing dead coat ... very warm water loosens the shedding hairs ... be careful not to burn/scald your dog, if the water is too hot for you, don't put him in it. A dog's body temperature is only about 3 degrees higher than humans.

Housebreaking the older dog

You and your family have made the decision to adopt an older dog from the shelter rather than a young puppy. The big day has finally arrived: You are bringing your new companion home with you. Everyone is happy and excited, including your new dog!

It's important for you to remember that your new companion finds these new experiences very stressful. You and your home are unfamiliar to him. He doesn't know where he is or even where the doors are that lead outside. The food and water are different. He doesn't know where he is going to sleep. He may or may not have been housetrained previously.

It would be wise to assume that he has not and start with him as you would with a young puppy.

One of the most important things you should do upon arriving home is introduce the dog to his yard or exercise area and let him eliminate before entering the house. He may or may not have been exercised on a leash. He will be curious and want to explore. Be patient and wait for him to eliminate. Be certain to praise him and let him know this was the right thing for him to do.

Changes in food and water, plus the stress of a new situation, can result in episodes of diarrhea. It would be a good thing to make certain he has frequent access to his outdoor elimination area the first few days. Don't expect him to tell you when he needs to go out. Go outside with him and praise him each and every time he eliminates.

Housetraining should be based on the prevention of accidents rather than discipline after the fact. If your dog makes a mistake because you didn't get him out when you should have - it's not his fault!

Since your dog is no longer a young puppy he will have better bowel and bladder control. Place the dog on a regular elimination schedule and take him outside at certain times, whether he needs to eliminate or not - first thing in the morning, after meals and play and the last thing at night. It is essential to accompany him to make certain he is, indeed, eliminating. Dogs are creatures of habit. The more quickly you turn a good behavior into a habit, the faster your training will go.

If you haven't already decided on a crate for your dog, you may want to investigate purchasing one for him. The most effective way to teach him to eliminate outdoors is to prevent him from using the house in the first place.

Dogs are den animals and have an instinct not to soil their den. The crate will become your dog's den.

Confinement to the crate overnight or for a three-to-four-hour period during the day when he is unsupervised will help speed the housetraining process.

Despite your best efforts and diligence an accident may occur. If it should happen, treat the incident in a matter-of-fact manner. It is critical that you not scare or confuse your dog by physical punishment or yelling. The dog won't understand why you're upset, and you are only creating more stress for your dog. Put the dog outdoors or in another room while you clean. If the accident should occur on carpeting use lots of paper towel and blot with fresh paper until you have lifted as much liquid as possible. Neutralize the odor with plain white vinegar and water or a commercial pet-odor eliminator. A diarrhea stain on carpeting or upholstery can be lifted with a solution of lukewarm water, dishwashing soap and white vinegar.

Housetraining your older dog requires patience, humor, understanding, compassion and time. He wants to please you by doing the right thing. Help him make the adjustment to his new home a successful one.

"Living With Multiple Dogs"

by Judith Halliburton, from *Raising Rover*

Far too often, by the time I'm called in on a "fighting dogs" case, there have been serious injuries, and I have to recommend that the client purchase prong collars... Please Human, if you have more than one dog, read this carefully.

Memorize! Their relationship has to be established. There is no equality, there is no democracy. There has to be a dominant dog; there has to be a subordinate dog.

Memorize! There is no such thing as jealousy. There is no such thing as hurt feelings.

Dogs are pack animals; even though they are domesticated, pack etiquette is part of who they are. Canines in a pack will not injure, maim, or kill each other, because all members are needed for hunting. If one is injured or killed, it weakens the pack. They will not weaken the pack intentionally. I'm sure you have some idea of Rover's power and the strength of his jaw and teeth (even if he's a Chihuahua). If he wanted to injure, maim, or kill, he could.

Now that that's understood, Human, we can go on. I'm going to dispel the jealousy myth first. Jealousy is a very complicated emotion, with a lot of thought going into it. Dogs don't have the ability for that. What you see in dogs and call jealousy is one of two things: competition (which is the equivalent of sibling rivalry) or straightening out the peck order.

Let's say, for example, we have Rover One and Rover Two. Rover One is dominant. You're petting Rover Two, and Rover One approaches. His ears are up and forward, his tail is wagging, and his body is animated. That's competition. You can pet both dogs at the same time!

Straightening out the peck order works like this: You're petting Rover Two, and Rover One approaches. His ears are up and forward and his chest is out. If his tail is wagging at all, it's moving very slowly. There's no liveliness in his body, and there's purpose to his walk. He will attempt to get between you and Rover Two. He's saying that he doesn't want Rover Two that close to you. You'll notice that Rover Two attempts to back away. Let Rover Two go. He knows what he's doing.

When dogs fight over and over again, it's usually on account of incorrect human interference. For example, when Rover One is straightening out the peck order, the human tendency is to say, "Rover Two, honey, you come back here." To Rover One, you say, "Go on, I was petting Rover Two first," and you push him away. Rover Two is thinking, "Please, oh please, oh please don't do this! I don't mind, I'll just go over here." Rover Two knows that Rover One will have to punish him later. Don't forget, they can't explain it to you. With your tone of voice, you praised Rover Two and disciplined Rover One. You compromised One's position as the dominant dog, and you did it in front of Rover Two.

When Rover One and Rover Two actually have a fight, our human tendency is to go immediately to the underdog, the one showing submission. You go to Rover Two and begin to check him for injuries, saying, "Are you all right? Did Rover One hurt you?" All this is said in a soothing, comforting voice. To Rover One, you say, "Rover One, shame on you! You get out of here and leave Rover Two alone! Bad dog! Bad dog!" All this is said in a stern tone. You praised Rover Two in front of Rover One, and disciplined Rover One in front of Rover Two. Again you've seriously compromised Rover One's position as the dominant dog. Both dogs now believe you want Rover Two to be dominant, and they're thinking, "Oh jeez, now we have to fight all over again!" because their relationship has to be reestablished as it applies to you and your position in the peck order. After a short time, you have two dogs that get along beautifully when no one's around and fight as soon as you're with them!

There's serious danger when this kind of fighting starts: the slightest provocation can start a fight. I call those stimulus fights. For example, the doorbell rings and both dogs run for the door. That can start a fight. They're in the yard, and they both bark at something. That can start a fight. You walk into the room. That can start a fight.

Company can start a fight. When stimulus fighting begins, there is no longer any "fight posturing," and absolutely no pack etiquette. With the loss of pack etiquette, and fight posturing, the dogs may fight with the intent to hurt each other. They don't know why they're fighting...

It's very simple to prevent serious fighting. Simply *don't interfere*. Now, Human, I know that's not easy to do because when they start fighting, it sounds unbelievably vicious and you think they're killing each other. They are usually not hurting each other. A fight seldom lasts longer than three minutes. It only seems like an hour. Any injuries are usually accidental--a scratch on the face (from a toenail, or tooth) or a nick in the ear. Occasionally, there's a bleeding tongue. If you just can't help it, and you must get involved, do so without saying anything to either dog. If you believe you need to check for injuries, do it silently, and check Rover One first. Do not separate the dogs after a fight. By that I mean, don't put them in separate areas. If you do, you take the chance that they'll fight again as soon as they see each other. Don't attempt to break up a fight alone. You can get seriously bitten and the dogs won't even know they did it. If you honestly believe they're getting hurt, and you have a helper, each of you should grab one dog's tail or hind legs and pull. In my business, I learn constantly. I've just learned that hair spray can stop a fight quickly.

If you have dogs that are fighting or beginning to fight, you can ward off serious problems by putting a few rules into effect. If you absolutely, positively know that Rover One is dominant, give him preferential treatment. You don't have to make a big deal of it. Put his food down first. Pet him first when you come home or the dogs come in the house or you go out to get them. When you give Rover One preferential treatment, you are letting both dogs know that you respect Rover One as the dominant dog.

If you're not sure who is dominant, notice which one goes through a door first. Who's in front when they walk across the yard or the room? Don't base your opinion on food. Dogs have food available to them on a daily basis...Dogs *can* show dominance over food, but don't pin your opinion on that one thing. Pay attention when you see one dog walk across the room and hesitate in front of the other dog. The subordinate dog will turn his head a little and look away. Once he does that, the dominant dog will continue to walk.

If there's been a lot of fighting, sometimes it's very difficult to tell which dog is dominant, because the subordinate dog is constantly on the defensive. I liken him to a child who has been beaten up and pushed around by the school bully. This child's always on guard, looking over his shoulder and ready to defend himself at any moment. It could be the subordinate dog who's starting the fights. If one of your dogs is that defensive, you'll have to watch for subtle signs of who's dominant. Watch them closely and objectively. Objectivity is sometimes hard to achieve. You may have a favorite dog, and you want that one to be dominant Or one dog is of a breed you think should be dominant, and you refuse to believe that he's not. Whatever your circumstances are, you can't deny the dominant dog. You must respect the dogs' relationship. You can't decide which one is going to be dominant.

If you have dogs that are fighting no matter what you do, take them to your veterinarian. It's possible the dog that doesn't seem to want to give up has a weakness of some kind; this could make him over defend himself. I had one case where the dogs had reached the point of intentionally injuring one another. It turned out one of them had serious hip dysplasia. In another similar case, one dog had a serious uterine infection.

There is one situation where I recommend interference. If you have an elderly dog with geriatric problems like cataracts or arthritis, or one that is weakened for some reason, put yourself in the Head Honcho position and protect that dog. Under most circumstances, the stronger dog will leave the weaker dog alone as long as it's understood that he's dominant. But every now and then I run into a dog that is a bully or has poor social skills. Also there are dogs that will fight any other dog at any time for no apparent reason. These dogs are few and far between, and usually do fine if they remain in a home with no other dogs...

I hope that after reading this, you have a better understanding of the dynamics of the peck order and how important it is in your dogs' lives.

CRATE TRAINING

Teaching Manners and Housetraining by “Crate” Method . . .

Dogs are den animals, preferring the security and coziness of an enclosed or covered area that is all their own. When dogs nap under furniture or curled into a chair, they are creating the feeling of a den.

A crate helps teach clean bathroom habits because dogs do not like to sleep and eliminate in the same place. After you teach him to accept the crate as a personal den, you can then gradually teach him to consider *your* den as off-limits for elimination, too.

However, a crate isn't magical; it must be used correctly or your dog will feel trapped and frustrated. Effective crate training must be approached with patience, consistency, and lots of positive reinforcement. It does not mean that your dog will live in a cage. A dog's crate should be a bed and a safe retreat from a loud, hectic world; a *positive* place. If you think of a crate as a cage or as a place for punishment, then crate training will not work for you and your dog. Your attitude toward the crate is even more important than his, especially at first.

Choosing the Right Crate . . .

Don't make the mistake of buying a crate that is too big. Your pup should have enough room to lie down, stand up, and turn around comfortably, but not enough to sleep in one corner and use the rest as a bathroom.

Using the Crate to Create a Den . . .

While you train your puppy or dog, you will need to set up a “safe zone”. This is an area you can close off from the rest of your home with a door, screen, or gate. The safe zone creates a den within a den, a small area with the crate inside it. Your dog will be isolated in this area during the day while you teach him the benefits of the crate. So make the safe zone a pleasant place to be.

♥ The safe zone should be large enough that the crate takes up no more than half of the space – less if possible. The crate should fit into a corner of the safe zone. Reserve a small patch of floor in the corner farthest from the crate for a thick layer of newspaper. (If you cover the entire floor with paper, you will be giving him permission to eliminate anywhere.)

♥ Try to choose an area where your pup can be part of some of your everyday household activities. Your pet wants to be included in your family, even when isolated for safety's sake.

♥ A bathroom may be a poor choice for the safe zone, since it is usually dark and boring and your pet will consider time spent in and around the crate as punishment. ***Never punish your dog in the crate or safe zone.***

♥ If possible, the area should have a window to let in natural light. If not, be sure there is an overhead light that can be left burning all day. However, do not leave lamps turned on. These could be dangerous if accidentally overturned.

Teaching Your Pup to Accept the Crate and the Safe Zone . . .

Your pup should be restricted to the safe zone whenever he will be without direct supervision for any length of time.

♥ From the very beginning, make a habit of spending time with him in the safe zone, having fun, so that the area will have positive memories. Another good positive boost is to place his food bowl just inside the open crate door at mealtimes.

♥ Be sure he has at least two safe toys available in the safe zone whenever you can't supervise – one hard rubber to chew and one soft fiber to toss and snuggle.

♥ Leave the crate door open, with access to the comfortable bedding inside. Add a soft, unwashed shirt to comfort him with your scent. Turn on a radio (low volume), calmly say a quick "good bye" and go. Don't make a scene. Soon he will use the crate regularly as an open bed during the day, and you can begin teaching him to accept the closed crate.

♥ Never use force to get your pup into the crate. The first few times you use the crate, put in a small treat and a chew-toy, and walk the pup inside. Be sure he faces the open door so he won't feel trapped inside. Let him walk in and out a few times, then close the door. After a few minutes (only at a moment when the pup is not crying), release him for playtime in the safe zone. Each day, increase the length of time your dog is confined in the closed crate.

♥ **Important rule:** Except for overnight sleeping, a puppy should not be left in a closed crate for more than two hours (no more than four for an adult) – even after he has completed the training period. For those times when your dog will be left alone for longer periods of time, he should have access to the entire safe zone and an open crate.

♥ Just before you begin your own bedtime preparations, take your pup outside for a last bathroom opportunity, put him in the closed crate for the night and say goodnight. He may cry when you close the door, but will quiet down eventually. Any kind of response from you – comforting sounds or even a shouted "Quiet!" will only encourage more barking and crying. Ignore the noise. If at all possible, the crate should be in your bedroom for the night. Your breathing, your scent, and your presence are all very comforting – especially if you haven't had much time together during the day.

HELPFUL TIPS IN DOG CARE

- ✓ Are you aware that chocolate is poisonous to dogs and can kill them?
- ✓ Please pick up small objects in the areas where your dog has access. Examples are coins, pens, pencils, golf balls, etc.
- ✓ Make sure he does not have any toys smaller than a tennis ball. Rubber squeaky toys should be durable enough that he cannot chew through the rubber. If holes appear, take the toy away and replace it with a stuffed animal made especially for dogs.
- ✓ Please make sure there are no plants anywhere that the dog can reach. Many household plants are poisonous, such as Asparagus Ferns, Azaleas, Dieffenbachia, Elephant Ears, Ficus, Ivy, Poinsettias, Pothos, Philodendrons, umbrella plants, etc.
- ✓ Never, ever give a dog bones of any kind! They can splinter and rupture his intestines.
- ✓ If you use blue disinfectant in the toilet bowl (this is not recommended), make sure the bathroom door is shut at all times and the lid is down.
- ✓ Keep all chemicals in a high place or locked cabinet. Dogs have been known to open cabinet doors.
- ✓ Are you aware that antifreeze is a major killer of pets? Antifreeze drips out of cars and forms puddles in parking lots. Dogs and cats smell the sweet liquid and lap it up. This will kill your pet very quickly, usually before you have time to get them to a veterinarian. There are non-toxic brands of antifreeze you can buy to eliminate this risk for your new pet.
- ✓ Dogs need water at all times. They cannot sweat, so they pant to keep cool. Water aids them in keeping their body temperature down. Lack of water can lead to overheating and possibly death.
- ✓ Allowing your dog to run free in the country could be a major disaster. He could get lost or end up on a road and get hit by a car. Or he could get into a fight with a wild animal or another dog.
- ✓ Did you know that dry dog food and nylon bones help clean a dog's teeth? Brush your dog's teeth at least once a week. This protects your dog from gum disease.
- ✓ Dogs need grooming often. Brush your dog at least once a week. And bathe him once a month. Weekly bathing is not recommended since it can dry the skin and cause itching and flaking.
- ✓ Crate training is a great way to housebreak a dog and keep him out of trouble. It also gives him a safe, secure "house" of his own.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PET IS MISSING!!

Move quickly! Every day your pet is missing your chances for recovery grow smaller. We suggest you take immediate action to recover your pet.

- ✓ Talk to your neighbors. Call or post notices on their mailboxes. Advise the area children that there is a reward for the safe return of your pet.
- ✓ Call and/or visit all animal shelters and rescue groups in your area. Post a lost notice with a picture at your Animal Control facility, and continue contacting them every other day. If you do not locate your pet on your first visit, do not be discouraged. Continue calling and visiting at least once a week. Many people who find stray animals will hold them and attempt to locate the owner prior to turning the animal over to a county facility.
- ✓ Contact local veterinarians or animal hospitals in case your pet is injured and is brought in by a good Samaritan.
- ✓ Post lost notices in area papers and homeowners association bulletins. Check the same publications for found notices.
- ✓ Post notices and pictures on local bulletin boards, such as grocery stores, the public library, post office, etc.
- ✓ Call us. Many times animals are traced back to us through the rabies tag or ORHS tag.
- ✓ Talk to your postal carrier. He or she visits every home in the area daily and may be able to report a sighting.
- ✓ Place an unwashed article of clothing you have worn at the edge of your yard. Your pet may have become disoriented and your scent will help him find his way home.

If someone contacts you and wants to set up a meeting to return your animal, BE SAFE. Make sure the meeting occurs in a high traffic, public area. Take a friend along with you.

CURRENT ID TAGS ARE A LOST PET'S TICKET HOME!

How to Handle Separation Anxiety

by Brandy J. Oliver, MA

Most puppies and some dogs experience a high level of anxiety when left alone, even for very short periods of time. Most puppies learn that when they are left alone, nothing really bad happens to them, they are still alive, and their "people" come back. They learn how to entertain themselves while alone and gain confidence in their ability to be alone. As they grow up and gain confidence in themselves, their "people" can leave them for longer periods of time.

Some dogs, for various reasons, do not gain confidence in themselves. Some dogs are left alone too long when they are puppies and they become traumatized by the event. Other dogs are neglected or abused and therefore have a low self-esteem. These dogs can be bounced around from owner to owner and usually end up in an animal shelter. After they are adopted to well-meaning people they can still carry their low self-esteem and exhibit their learned behavior of separation anxiety. Other dogs for unknown reasons have a low tolerance for anxiety. And lastly, any dog can become traumatized unbeknownst to their "people" by some event and can spontaneously begin to experience separation anxiety.

All of these types of dogs can show profound anxiety when being left alone, or simply out of eye-sight of their "people." The process of teaching them self-confidence and the ability to entertain themselves can be time consuming and requires a lot of patience and positive reinforcement. Here's how to do it:

Begin by changing your "leaving" routine. Dogs that exhibit separation anxiety usually begin to get anxious long before you walk out the door. Most people have a set "leaving" routine that they go through before leaving the house. They put their shoes on, close the windows, lock the doors, jingle the car keys, etc. Dogs learn this routine very quickly and if they already get anxious from being left alone, this long, drawn out "leaving" routine can make matters worse.

When you leave the house, do so promptly. When you leave, say "Take care of the house." Don't make a big deal out of leaving, just start to teach them a phrase that means, "I'll be gone, but I'll be back." Then, when you leave, turn around and come back in after about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Say hello to your dog in a low-key manner and go about your day. You need to be low-key so that you teach your dog to be low-key. If you are overly anxious about leaving or coming home you will be conditioning your dog to be anxious as well.

The first day, you will leave and come back about a dozen times. Each time you leave, increase the time you are gone: 1 minute, 2 minutes, 3 minutes, 5 minutes, 7 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes, etc. *Any* time you come home and your dog was exhibiting his anxious behavior (chewing, barking, etc.) cut the time you leave in half next time. If he's still experiencing separation anxiety, cut your time in half again! Once your dog is no longer anxious, start increasing the times again.

Because of the time and commitment involved in these exercises, it is best if do this on your vacation time for the first week or until you build up to about 4 hours of being gone with no anxiety from your dog. If vacation time is impossible, then start on Friday afternoon or evening, and make this your primary activity for the whole weekend. Then repeat this again the following weekend, varying the time you are gone. Leave for 30 minutes, then for 5 minutes, then for 10 minutes, then for 2 hours, etc.

Dogs are social animals, and any dog that spends 8-10 hours a day, everyday all alone may begin to exhibit obsessive behaviors that may or may not develop into separation anxiety. A dog that experiences separation anxiety usually does his damage as soon as (or very shortly after) you leave the house. A dog that is bored and lonely will become destructive after a few hours (usually 4-6) of being left alone.

Another great confidence builder for dogs is any type of doggie class. Even if your dog knows all the obedience commands, he will benefit from a class situation. Taking your dog to a doggie class increases the dog's confidence in being able to handle new situations. It also increases his confidence in you as "leader." Most importantly, it gives him the opportunity to socialize with other dogs and people, and spend quality time you.

If your dog is an "only" dog it is possible that this exacerbates his separation anxiety. Some dogs that do not have canine companionship become overly dependent on their humans. Sometimes referred to as "Velcro-dogs" (a dog that seems to stick to you where ever you go), they experience a great amount of stress whenever they are not accompanied by a human. Although not recommended as a cure-all, you may want to consider getting another dog or puppy for companionship. Another wonderful option is to find a playmate for your dog. A weekly visit to or from a doggie-playmate's house can be very beneficial to "only" dogs (even those that do not suffer from separation anxiety). Dogs benefit greatly from canine companionship. Schedule a playtime for your dog, with another dog that he likes, once or twice a week.

Be sure to spend daily quality time with your dog. One-on-one time spent with your dog for 5 - 20 minutes a day can help your dog feel more secure in his environment as well as help strengthen the bond between you both. Even if you have a Velcro-dog, quality, one-on-one time where your attention is focused on your dog is essential. This quality time should not consist of babying, stroking, or cuddling. Instead, it should consist of doing things to build a strong master/dog relationship and bolster the confidence of your dog. Fun obedience work using positive reinforcement, interspersed with fun games of fetch, chase, and hide & seek can be very beneficial for the psychological well-being of your dog. A book you may want to consider purchasing is called "[Playtraining Your Dog](#)." Another wonderful book is called [So Your Dog's Not Lassie](#), it is a great book to learn how to teach your dog.

Rockin' P Rescue NOTE: One of the easiest things you might want to try first is to switch your dog to a high quality lower protein food over 3-4 days. You should notice a difference after a day or two of the new food. One to try is Nutro Natural Choice for large breeds. Of course you should consult your veterinarian before making changes to your dog's diet.

You may also try putting a T-shirt on your dog during periods of high stress. It should fit tight enough to not interfere with movement, so you may need to tie the excess in a knot over the back. Wear the T-shirt overnight before putting it on your dog so that it has your scent.

If your dog needs additional help coping with separation anxiety, contact the director, Angie Persch. She will give you contact information for Helen Sutton with TTouch.