

# The Dog Anxiety Cure:

**Secrets For Relieving Particularly  
High Strung & Anxious Dogs Of Their  
Fears And Phobias... *Naturally!***



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## Introduction: Symptoms Of Dog Anxiety

If you own a dog that is particularly high strung, anxious, or fearful, then you know it's not just the dog who is suffering...

... Your entire household is often turned upside down by your dog's fears and phobias.

Anxious and fearful dogs monopolize your time and attention with:



- **Excessive vocals** – crying, whining, howling, or barking
- **Nervous body language** – shaking, panting, cowering, pacing, or burrowing
- **Destruction** – chewing, shredding, inappropriate digging, scratching
- **Loss of control of bodily functions** – drooling, vomiting, sweaty feet, peeing, defecating
- **Self-mutilation** – chewing feet, excessive licking, over cleaning.
- **Frantic attempts to get your attention** – pushing, jumping, nosing, licking
- **Public disobedience** – fear aggression, cowering, submissive peeing, thrashing on the end of the leash

... And there are probably a few that I've missed.

The point is, when you have a dog that suffers with severe anxiety, noise phobias, or social fears, simple activities like taking a walk... leaving your dog while you run an errand... or even just vacuuming -- all become a *nightmare!*

It's impossible to relax when you know, at any moment, your dog's fear response could be triggered. And of course, you suffer enormous guilt watching your dog's downward emotional spiral.

Each time, you wonder:

Is it MY fault...?

Is there something I could have done differently to prevent the fear or phobia from developing in the first place?

Is there something I could be doing NOW to cure my dog's anxiety?

## Why Feeling Guilty Is A Waste Of Your Energy

There are many reasons why dogs become phobic or overly anxious.

Some are taken from their litters too soon or too late. Some experience a traumatic event while they are puppies. Some experience abuse or neglect prior to being rehomed.

And yes, sometimes their inexperienced owners make innocent training mistakes during their dog's formative years, accidentally triggering the anxiety.

However, I really want to say, if you're a loving dog owner, then I wouldn't spend too much time feeling guilty or blaming yourself. Because the fact is:

**There is a BIG genetic component to dog anxiety!**

**An article that appeared in the *Journal of Veterinary Behavior* (2006: 1; 12-141) talks about how over 50 dog breeds recognized by the American Kennel Club are reported to have family lines where fear, shyness, nervousness, panic, and anxiety are all major breeder-reported concerns.**

This is significant! Over 50 breeds...!

And this is why any truly honest and reputable dog trainer will tell you – they've owned dogs with anxiety issues, too!

**Because the genetic component is the WILD CARD.**

The same trainer... the same house... the same food... the same socialization... can produce vastly different dogs.

It's why some dogs seem oblivious to loud noises like firecrackers or vacuum cleaners, while others exhibit behaviors of severe distress like hiding, shaking, and whining.

And it's why some dogs will happily spend their days alone, sleeping or playing with their toys, while others panic, scratching at the doors, chewing at door frames, and trying to dig their way out of the house.



However, even though there may be a big genetic component to your dog's anxiety and fear responses, this doesn't mean you should give up and leave your dog to suffer.

## Dogs Who Suffer With Anxiety Have A *SHORTER* Life Span!

Here's a study that really got my attention...

A recent survey by Pennsylvania State University of 721 owners of dogs who had recently passed away uncovered that dogs with extreme fear and anxiety have a shorter life span than their happier, more relaxed counterparts.

Plus, anxious dogs tend to experience a greater frequency of skin disorders!

**Quote: "There is evidence to suggest that the stress of living with a fear or anxiety disorder can have negative effects on health and lifespan in the domestic dog."**

*(Applied Animal Behaviour Science, Volume 125, Issues 3-4, July 2010 Pages 157-162)*

... This probably isn't all that surprising when you think about it.

But it should provide added motivation for owners to take their dog's anxiety issues more seriously, earlier in the life... to help prevent future health problems and early death!

## Understanding What Triggers Your Dog's Fear Response

The first step in helping your dog overcome his anxiety and fears is recognizing the triggers.

And if you can trace the fear back to the original cause, so much the better.

This might require you to play the role of psychologist to your dog, so climb up on the sofa together, get comfy, and think back.



The most common anxiety triggers are:

- **Loud noises** – (especially prior to 4 mos. of age) like firecrackers, vacuum cleaners, loud speakers, motorcycles, buildings that echo, sudden crashing, children shrieking.
- **Visits to the vet or boarding kennel** – particularly after a single traumatic visit that involved being left alone and/or experiencing pain.

- **Being left alone** – triggered by removal from the litter too early or too late, being abandoned by previous owners, too much time spent alone before 4 months of age, a traumatic event while you were away (you may not ever know what this was), not enough attention, not enough exercise.
- **A previous physical trauma** – a dog attacked them during puppyhood, a child scared or hurt them, they were hit by an object, etc.
- **Abuse by previous owner** – results in the dog expecting unpredictable or abusive behaviors from anyone resembling the previous owner and/or strangers.
- **Not enough socialization** – a busy family may bring home a dog, underestimating the time commitment, resulting in the dog spending too much time alone and being under-socialized.
- **A big change in home life** – perhaps you’ve moved, there’s a new baby, maybe there’s been a death in the family, or maybe the dog’s primary caregiver got a new job and is spending more time away.

Once you’ve established *\*why\** your dog is exhibiting anxiety, it becomes much easier to help him or her work through the problem.

## Why Your Dog Forgets His Training When Feeling Anxious

Do you find it difficult to think clearly when you’re feeling scared or upset?

Well, your dog experiences this problem, too...

When your dog is anxious or afraid, his nervous system secretes chemicals (norepinephrine and dopamine) that cause the parts of his brain associated with learning and logic to, quite literally, shut down.

So if it seems like your dog’s brain has turned off when he’s upset, that’s because it HAS!



And this means any training you’ve done is likely to be forgotten during moments of high anxiety and fear.

So depending on the situation, your dog may resort to more instinctive canine behaviors and coping strategies like barking, trying to escape, burrowing, cowering, snarling, etc...

... All of those fear responses we talked about earlier!

So how do you deal with a fearful or anxious dog who has stopped thinking?

## Why Your “Suck It Up” Attitude Isn’t Helping

The secret to providing your dog with relief from his phobias or anxiety is NOT repeated exposure to whatever he’s afraid of with a “suck it up” or “get over it” attitude.

Remember: your dog’s brain shuts off when anxiety or fear kicks in, so it’s unrealistic to expect him to be logical and work through the fear.

For example, if you’ve got a dog who is scared of the vacuum cleaner, forcing him to sit next to a running vacuum cleaner isn’t likely to help.

He’s going to panic, his brain is going to shut off, and he’s going to try to escape.

And he’s not going to trust you the next time you pull out the vacuum cleaner, either!

**Important Note:** *If you’ve tried to “force” your dog to overcome his phobias previously, you will have some extra work to do re-establishing trust before you can begin working on dealing with the phobia or anxiety.*

## And Why Coddling Doesn’t Help Either!

The flip side is, until now you may have been coddling your anxious dog, offering sympathy and positive attention when his emotional downward spiral starts.

The problem is, dogs do not register sympathy or comfort like people.

From your dog’s perspective, your sympathy, petting, and attention during his time of anxiety just reinforces his assessment that there’s something wrong or something to be afraid of – *making the situation WORSE!*

## Curing Anxiety: The Pre-Game Plan

If you visited your doctor complaining of anxiety, your doctor wouldn’t simply focus on what’s making you anxious – he or she would evaluate your overall health and lifestyle.

Because multiple factors can contribute to anxiety including:

- **Age**
- **Genetic predisposition**
- **Lack of exercise**
- **Poor diet**
- **Previous trauma**
- **And, of course, stress!**

The same holds true for dogs!

And this means that helping your dog overcome his or her anxieties will likely require multiple changes to their lifestyle.

## 1. Start With Exercise

If your dog is exhibiting anxious behaviors, he could probably benefit from MORE exercise. After all, a tired dog is typically a GOOD dog!

So at the very least, plan to exercise your dog prior to any desensitization training you do (we'll discuss this shortly).

I highly recommend that you look up the recommended daily exercise levels for your breed. Some breeds need significantly more exercise than others, though in most cases 45-60 minutes of vigorous exercise (split into 2 play times of 20-30 minutes per day) is reasonable.



## 2. Assess Your Dog's Diet

Children who eat nothing but junk food don't do as well in school, have trouble concentrating, and are at higher risk of developing serious physical and mental health issues.

So it shouldn't surprise you that the same holds true for your dog!

If your dog is high strung, anxious, or phobic, it's time to examine what you're feeding him. Because what you're feeding your dog is having a direct impact on his mood and his ability to cope with stress.

Nutrition requirements vary by breed, so I'm not going to attempt to make diet recommendations here. This is a discussion to have with your breeder and/or vet.



However, I will say that you need to read labels carefully and make sure you AVOID dog foods and treats that are primarily corn based!

**Foods high in corn actually \*decrease\* serotonin levels in your dog's brain – a problem because serotonin is one of the “feel good” chemicals.**

So look for foods that include rice, potato, or barley instead of corn.

And be sure to **feed your dog 2-3 times per day to maintain consistent blood sugar levels.** This helps to maintain consistent mood as well.

### **3. Assess Your Own Emotional State**

Yes, that's right... I'm recommending that you take stock of your own emotional state.

Do you have the ability to detach and remain unemotional during the “desensitization phase” I'm about to discuss? Or, have past experiences with your dog been deeply upsetting, possibly even traumatic, for you too?

It's important that you're honest with yourself about this.

Because if, for example, you're always on edge while walking your dog, afraid of encountering other dogs... or kids... or bikes... or whatever else might trigger your dog's anxious behaviors, then you may not be the best person to help break the cycle.

At least not initially.

Your dog easily picks up on your anxiety. Slight changes in your posture, facial expressions, how you hold the leash, even how you smell, all let your dog know, loud and clear, that you're anxious too.

If you can't detach and remain unemotional during the desensitization phase, you may need to enlist the help of another family member, friend, or dog trainer.

### **Curing Anxiety With Gradual Desensitization**

If your child had an intense fear of heights, you wouldn't force them to jump off the high dive board at the local pool.

You would, I hope, take a kinder, gentler, more gradual approach to helping them overcome their fear – knowing that with time, patience, and baby steps, there was a good chance you could help them work past their phobia.

I encourage you to take this same approach with your dog.

Think of your dog as a small child.

Expect results to come slowly. Be patient. Be KIND!

## **Avoid Triggering The Fear Response**

The first step in building your dog's confidence and helping them beat the anxiety is actually avoiding triggering their fear response.

Remember: when your dog is afraid, his brain turns OFF!

So don't go there...

Instead, start where your dog is comfortable and inch forward.

For example, if your dog is afraid of your noisy vacuum cleaner, start by just getting the vacuum cleaner out of the closet, and leaving it in a corner of the room. Don't turn it on.

If your dog suffers with separation anxiety, start by preparing to leave your house, but don't actually go anywhere.

If your dog is afraid of car travel, start by just getting inside the car with the dog for a couple of minutes but don't actually go anywhere.

... I'm sure you get the idea.

The goal is to avoid triggering the fear response, so the exposure or activity feels positive for your dog. Repeat the activity, over and over, until your dog is utterly bored, couldn't care less, or is happily enjoying that level exposure.

Then, inch forward again.

Turn the vacuum cleaner on and off. Walk away.

Go out the door and come right back inside.

Turn the car on but don't go anywhere.

... Keep an eye on your dog – if anxiety levels shoot through the roof, you may need to take a step back. Otherwise, continue this level of exposure until your dog is either bored or happy.

Then, inch forward again.

## The Kindest Thing You Can Do? Ignore Your Dog!

During desensitization, it's very important that you ignore your dog. Don't praise him. Don't offer sympathy. Don't discipline. Don't make eye contact.

IGNORE your dog!

... And focus on being completely relaxed.

Everything about you, from your facial expression to your posture, needs to communicate the message "it's no big deal" to your dog.



I'll give you an example that should help you understand why:

Let's say your dog is terrified of the vacuum cleaner.

You start the desensitization training and after a couple of days, your dog has stopped nervously barking at the vacuum cleaner. Now he's just pacing and staring at it. You offer big praise and cuddles for this marked improvement.

But here's what you've done wrong:

Your dog is still not in a good frame of mind. He's still scared. You've just praised him for this continued state of anxiety. He doesn't comprehend that you've praised the "improvement."

So again, the very best thing you can do is ignore your dog.

By offering no attention at all, you reinforce that it's no big deal.

## The Exception – When Commands Might Be Okay

If your dog is anxious or fearful, the likelihood of him obeying commands drops drastically.

Again, because his brain shuts off.

So you need to use your best judgement. In most situations when dogs are exhibiting anxiety, the best course of action is to ignore the dog entirely.

However, if your dog is particularly well trained, or enjoys a particular toy or activity, you may be able to issue a command or give your dog a job BEFORE the anxiety is triggered – offering a distraction.

But this needs to be well timed... and you need to know that your dog will listen.

For example, if your dog is afraid of kids on skateboards, you might consider distracting your dog with a few fun, fast commands and a treat for a job well done. In this case, you're praising the dog for focusing on YOU, though, not for a lack of anxiety.

And if you issue a command and the dog doesn't listen due to anxiety, do NOT discipline! Go back to strategy #1 – IGNORE! Because the discipline will only further amplify the negative feelings associated with the trigger!

## Herbal Remedies To Help Speed Results

If your dog suffers with **extreme anxiety** or **multiple phobias**, you may find that you need more than just patience and a plan. Because...

**If your dog never relaxes, he'll never be in the positive frame of mind that you need to begin desensitization!**

Some vets will recommend you try beating anxiety with forms of “Doggie Prozac” like clomipramine, fluoxetine, and alprazolam.

However, unless this is something your vet recommends, I don't suggest actively seeking out these prescriptions as they come with the risk of significant side effects that include vomiting, diarrhea, stomach upset, panting, hyperactivity, shaking, restlessness, seizures, clumsiness, loss of appetite, and more.

Instead, I would recommend trying an all-natural herbal remedy first.

### **Pet Calm™:**

**For relaxing your dog before they're exposed to anxiety triggers**

This is a safe, non-addictive, 100% natural homeopathic remedy that's been registered with the FDA and formulated especially for dogs to help relieve acute symptoms of fear and anxiety.

And what I particularly like about [Pet Calm™](#) is that you can quickly and easily give it to your dog prior to exposing him to a trigger, helping him to relax and easing him into the desensitization training.

(This also makes it a great solution for dogs who fear thunder, Halloween fireworks, car travel, etc. – easing their emotional response to these occasional stressors.)

Pet Calm™ is easy to administer because you just sprinkle the granules on your dog's tongue and they're quickly absorbed – there are no big horse pills to shove into their mouth.

And because it's all natural, there are no side effects to worry about and your dog can't become addicted to it, which is a risk with some prescription medications.

Ingredients include *Scutellaria*, *Kalio phos*, and *Arg nit*, which are all excellent for soothing the nervous system, plus it includes *Passiflora* for relaxation. And it's manufactured in an FDA and GMP registered pharmaceutical facility under the supervision of qualified homeopaths and responsible pharmacists.



[To get Pet Calm™ or learn more, click here.](#)

## Performance Plus™:

**For healthy brain function and improved ability to cope with stress**

What I love about Performance Plus™ is that it's a daily supplement formulated to support healthy brain function of your dog... on an ongoing basis!

Advances in veterinary medicine have allowed naturopaths and herbalists to formulate this excellent brain tonic that helps maintain concentration and memory, and improves your dog's ability to deal with stress by supporting the adrenal glands – without making him drowsy!

There are plenty of supplements like this for people – it makes perfect sense that our dogs should benefit from similar daily supplementation.

Ingredients that include *Gotu Cola*, *Rosemary*, and *Spirulina* all help your dog to more easily cope with stress, making it far easier to socialize, train, and build his confidence.

And again, it's manufactured in an FDA and GMP registered pharmaceutical facility under the supervision of qualified homeopaths and responsible pharmacists.



[To get Performance Plus™ or learn more, click here.](#)

## Conclusion:

Anxious, fearful dogs can be difficult to live with...

You worry about them. You feel sorry for them. And their negative emotions have a significant impact on your home life and ability to enjoy getting out both with and without your dog!

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to ease your dog's anxiety:

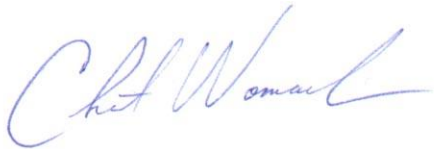
- 1. Recognize that once your dog's fear has been triggered, his brain shuts down. You can't train a scared dog. A scared dog is not thinking logically.**
- 2. To relieve and/or cure anxiety, you must begin desensitization BEFORE his downward emotional spiral begins, before his brain shuts down.**
- 3. Be patient. Increase exposure to the trigger slowly. If your dog can't handle a particular level of exposure, it means you're moving too fast. Go back a few steps and start again.**
- 4. Be confident. Act like nothing's wrong. Keep your own emotions in check.**
- 5. Ignore your dog. Do not pet or praise your dog. Do not discipline your dog for not listening or obeying commands. Both praise and discipline are likely to be misinterpreted when your dog is afraid.**
- 6. Offer your dog NO sympathy, ever. It only serves to reinforce his assessment that there's a problem.**
- 7. Consider using an herbal calming remedy like [Pet Calm™](#) if your dog is particularly anxious or high strung, or if he suffers from multiple fears and phobias. This can help speed desensitization training by naturally keeping your dog more relaxed as you increase exposure to triggers.**

So there you have it: my game plan for dealing with canine anxiety.

I hope you've enjoyed this free report and I would love to hear what you think about these tips and strategies – so please be sure to leave your comments and stories on my blog at:

<http://www.thedogtrainingsecret.com/blog>

All the best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chet Womach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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