



## **Back to School Blues: Helping your Pet Adjust to Increased Alone Time**

As the kids start heading back to school in the next few months, your pet may find themselves alone a lot more often than they were used to over the summer. Make sure your pet is prepared for this transition with these tips and tricks to help your pet readjust to increased alone time!

### **Introduce interactive toys and enrichment activities:**

To help keep your pet busy while they're alone, you can provide them with interactive toys, puzzles, as well as enrichment activities. Interactive toys can help your pet tire out their body and mind. Puzzle toys and feeders are great ways to keep your pet busy and engaged while you are away. Treat dispensers are also great ways to keep your pet busy. You can invest in a robotic treat dispenser that can be activated remotely or simply find a treat dispenser toy that requires your pet to work to get the treat out.

Enrichment activities are also great for tiring out your pets and keeping them busy. Doing things like daily walks, playtime, obedience training, or even enrolling them in doggy daycare can help provide your pet with socialization and activities throughout the day.

### **Make your own toys and treats:**

No need to blow the budget on buying toys and treats; you can make your own with things you have at home!

#### **Tennis Ball Treat Dispenser:**

Cut a small slit in a tennis ball and fill it with small treats or pieces of kibble. Your dog will have a blast while working hard to get the treats out of the slit.

#### **Towel Treat Knot:**

Lay out a towel and spread treats throughout it. Roll up the towel and tie it in a knot in the middle. Your pet will be busy trying to get the treats out while untying the knot!

### Sock Knot Toy:

Similar to the towel toy, take a long sock and tie a knot in the middle. You can also add extra knots along the length of the sock for added interest. This toy is great for tugging and chewing.

### Frozen Food Fun\*:

Fill a Kong toy with a mixture of wet dog food, peanut butter, or mashed banana. Freeze it overnight, and then give it to your dog for a refreshing and engaging treat that will keep them busy!

If you don't have a Kong, you can freeze some pet-friendly foods in blocks of ice to create an interactive treat and toy combo!

\*Make sure to avoid any foods that are dangerous to pets! Make sure to ask us if you are unsure about any ingredients!

### **Ease into alone time proactively:**

Work with your pet to gradually get them used to spending time by themselves before they find themselves alone for long periods. Begin with short periods and gradually extend them, allowing your dog to adjust to being alone without feeling anxious or stressed.

When introducing alone time, make sure you leave them with plenty of toys and distractions to help keep them occupied and out of trouble! Before you leave, consider turning on the television or radio to alleviate the unsettling effect of silence on pets. This additional background noise helps promote a sense of calmness and distracts them from external sounds that might otherwise bother them.

As the school year approaches and our routines shift, it's important to consider our furry companions' well-being when readjusting to alone time. By employing the strategies in this blog, you can help your pet adapt to their increased alone time. If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment with **[your hospital's name]** give us a call at **[phone number]**.