

Some Possible Causes of Home Alone Problems in Dogs

Below are listed the most common causes of home alone problems with their descriptions. The causes are listed in order of decreasing frequency. The most frequent causes are listed first, the least frequent are listed last.

Boredom

- Dog doesn't have enough to do or not given the opportunities to do what he needs to do
- Can be caused by lack of exercise
- Lack of mental stimulation
- Lack of social contact
- Lack of control over his environment

Excitement or Play

- Animals becoming excited when see or hear things such as other dogs outside the yard
- Animals playing with each other or with objects
- Can attempt to escape, cause damage and/or bark excessively
- More common in puppies and younger dogs

Houstraining or Scent Marking

- You find pee and poop where they shouldn't be when you return home
- Dog may never have been completely house trained
- Dog may have had a breakdown in house training
- Dog may be urine marking in response to other animals he sees or hears or to conflict with other dogs in the house or yard

Separation Anxiety

- Irrational fear of being separated from others, usually people
- Causes panic resulting in house soiling, barking and howling, destructiveness and/or attempts to escape

Fears or Phobias

- Fears are adaptive responses to perceived threats
- Phobias are persistent irrational fears of things, situations or individuals
- They have behavioral as well as physiological elements
- Fearful and phobic dogs can house soil, bark and howl attempt to escape and/or become destructive

Sexual Interest

- Dogs bark, howl, urine mark, become destructive and/or attempt to escape
- More likely in adult, intact (not spayed or neutered) males or females
- Dogs may also get into fights with other dogs

Aggression

- Dog may bark, howl, urine mark, become destructive and/or attempt to escape
- Dog threatens or attacks people or animals when you aren't around
- Can be different reasons for it – Fear, territoriality, possessiveness
- More common in adult dogs
- Not all different kinds are treated the same

Hunger, Thirst or Physical Discomfort

- Dog may bark and howl, eliminate inappropriately, become destructive and/or attempt to escape
- Hunger, thirst or extreme environmental conditions can cause the problem
- It may not be obvious if it happens when you aren't around

Illness, Pain or Injury

- Dog may bark, howl, eliminate inappropriately or become destructive
- Medical problems may not always be obvious
- Dogs don't always act sick when they are ill
- If it happens when you are gone you may not recognize it

Compulsive Behavior

- Dog may show repetitive barking, pacing or digging
- Compulsive disorders are poorly understood – may be a response to intense distress or boredom or may have a medical cause