



Teaching a dog To Be Alone

Training exercise #1

For this exercise your dog should be gently contained by a baby gate, ex-pen, crate, or tether. Be sure that they are not unduly worried about the containment before moving forward with the protocol.

You want to time your departures and returns so that your dog continues to be calm and happy. If your dog begins to bark, wait for them to quiet, even if only for a second, before you move back toward them.

Give your dog something fabulous like a frozen Kong
Say "I'll be back"
Take one step away
Return immediately, and trade a treat for the Kong

Give your dog something fabulous like a frozen Kong
Say "I'll be back"
Take one step away
Return after a count of 2, and trade a treat for the Kong

Give your dog something fabulous like a frozen Kong
Say "I'll be back"
Take two steps away
Return immediately, and trade a treat for the Kong

Give your dog something fabulous like a frozen Kong
Say "I'll be back"
Take one step away
Return after a count of 3, and trade a treat for the Kong

Increase the time and distance of your departures in teensy tiny bits. When you step farther away, stay away for a shorter period of time, and when you lengthen the time that you are away, shorten the distance. In this way you help your dog to remain in her "success zone".

Occasionally make your departure *shorter* than the previous one.

Lather, rinse, repeat.

This exercise is based loosely on Suzanne Clothier's (www.suzanneclothier.com) wonderful "I'll Be Back" protocol.

Training exercise #2

This exercise is designed to help your dog accept that you and she are in the same house, but not together. It is particularly helpful for new parents who want to help their dog to be calm and happy while they are on one side of a baby gate while their people are on the other, caring for their infant. If you're expecting, begin this exercise right away!

Place your dog's mat on one side of an ex-pen or baby gate.

Sit just on the other side of the barrier and read a book.

Toss a treat on her mat from time to time, before she begins to worry.

If you are a little late with the treat (oops!), ignore whining, attention-seeking, etc., unless she is truly in distress, but...

...immediately reward quiet behavior.

Gradually extend the time between reinforcement.

Gradually move your chair farther from the baby gate, always setting the distance for your dog's success.

Training your dog to go to a mat before doing exercise #2 will be helpful.