

## Destructive Behaviour

Dogs chew up cushions etc when their owner leaves them at home alone or in the car because of anxiety.

To alleviate anxiety you must teach the dog to be secure, so start by giving his own place, whether it be a mat, basket, beanbag, or just a certain spot in the house. While you are at home teach the dog to go to that place and lie down while you stay in the room, do this for short times to start then build up the time. When the dog...  
...has learnt to stay there happily while you're in the room, try going into another room again starting with short periods then build up the time you can be out of the room without him getting upset. When you have achieved this try going out the door then come straight back in. Again build up the time you can go outside slowly. Then carry on by going out to the drive etc..

It is important that you do not rush this, it must be done in steady stages so that the dog doesn't become anxious.

Do not yell at your dog or discipline him in any way if you should have to genuinely have to go out and he chews something. It may make you feel better at the time but it will only make your dog feel worse. He does not feel 'guilty' when you come home (this is a human emotion) all he understands is that he was upset and chewed something - he knows your arrival means he will get told off. He is then confused as he wants to see you (that caused the anxiety in the first place) but he knows that when he sees you he will get told off - end result for the dog is even more anxiety over this conflict of feelings.

### Chewing Shoes Etc

As with most training, prevention is better than cure. Keep shoes etc out of reach, find or buy him a toy of his own that he can play with and chew. If he does chew something of yours take him to it (not the reverse) and chastise him for touching the item.

### Digging Holes

When you are unable to supervise your dog enclose him on something he can't dig such as concrete or wood. If he is unable to dig he will gradually eliminate the habit.

When supervising him if you should see him start to dig try to scare him by rushing at him and shouting NO!

Remember prevention is better than cure, if you don't let him start a habit you won't have to cure him of it. Make sure he is exercised and socialised and he has entertainment in his environment.

Stay tuned, more on this topic later. Check back soon.