



## Leaving Pets Home Alone

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*Barking, crying, tearing up the house. Many dogs become terrors when their owners leave. 7's Phil Lipof has a simple drug free way to soothe your dog -- when they're "Home Alone".*

Two-year-old Otis is a pretty happy pup when his owner Greg of Westford is around.

**Greg Neptune, Dog owner**

"Loves people, loves other animals."

What Otis doesn't love is being stuck home when Greg goes to school.

**Greg Neptune, Dog owner**

"He gets pretty aggravated when he gets left alone."

Otis suffers from mild separation anxiety. A condition vets say affects 15 million dogs across the U.S.

These home videos of local Massachusetts dogs show the scratching, barking, and tearing apart the house. All bad behaviors caused by separation anxiety.

**Dr. Amy Marder, New England Veterinary Behavior Assoc.**

"When the dog is left alone, he barks frantically, urinates or defecates, or destroys things."

Over the years there have been several studies looking at whether pets respond to music when home alone...

One study out of Belfast found that shelter pets that listened to classical music were calmer than those who listened to heavy metal were.

And other anecdotal studies presented by harpist Sue Raimond found harp music may soothe the savage beast.

**Dr. Amy Marder, New England Veterinary Behavior Assoc.**

"Dogs do respond differently to different types of music. We know that now."

Reported by: [Phil Lipof](#)

In response to this research, several new products have been put on the market. Designed to relax pets when their owners are away. For example -- a dog DVD full of barking, squeaking, and quacking.

We decided to try it out with Harley and Dee.. Two South End labs who had never seen it before. Harley reacts immediately by barking and sniffing the TV. Dee appears to be watching calmly from the couch, looking up from time to time.

Dr. Nicholas Dodman of Tufts University Veterinary School is author of the book "Dogs Behaving Badly."

**Dr. Nicholas Dodman, Tufts University**

"The worst thing is the sound of silence. Or just the sound of a ticking clock."  
His research has found DVDs and music can calm anxious pets, to an extent.

**Dr. Nicholas Dodman, Tufts University**

"That is only one small component to an elaborate program. But I think it's a useful one."

But he says...a homemade recording could work just as well as a professional one.

**Dr. Nicholas Dodman, Tufts University**

"Dishwasher going, children are screaming - even calling out the dog's name.

Make a tape of this commotion and just play it at low volume."

Animal behaviorist Dr. Amy Mader agrees that using sound to entertain your dog could help in mild cases of anxiety. But she says it's probably not going to work on pets with extreme symptoms.

**Dr. Amy Marder, New England Veterinary Behavior Assoc.**

"What happens is the radio has been associated with being left alone. So the radio is more likely to cause anxiety than to relieve the anxiety."

Greg bought a DVD for Otis and says it works great for his dog.

**Greg Neptune, Dog owner**

"It kept his attention. We had our feet out the door and he didn't notice we'd left.

He was too busy watching the animals on the TV."

Which helps with Greg's peace of mind as well.

**For more information:**

Doggy Times:

<http://www.doggytimes.com>

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