COVID 19: Pet Behaviour Advice

COVID-19 and the lockdowns have had a huge impact on yours, and your pet’s, worlds. Consequently, your pet may behave differently, becoming anxious or frustrated. Prepare them now by gradually introducing your ‘new normal’ routine.

What could impact your pet?

**Post lockdown with you being away from home more may mean:**
- Fewer walks, play, exercise, or they may happen at different times and in different places
- Changes to the frequency of outside access
- Less company
- Changes to when and how often they are fed or given treats
- Less monitoring of pet to pet interactions in the home

**Changes to COVID-19 restrictions may mean:**
- Meeting new people, animals and places
- People wearing face coverings which may make them look and sound strange to pets
- Changes in the ways you are able to exercise your pets

What can you do?

- Familiarise yourself with the signs cats and dogs use to tell us how they are feeling
- Your pet will need time to adapt if you go back out to work so start preparing now
- Introduce your pet to face coverings at home
- Decide your new routine – plan your day around your pet’s needs to provide consistency
- Consider using dog walkers or day care, or dog/cat flaps to a secure garden or large pen
- Some pets become anxious when left alone. Teach your dog or cat that it is OK to be alone
- Provide your pet with suitable activity toys and puzzle feeders for mental stimulation
- Introduce familiar and unfamiliar people and dogs gradually, both in the home and outdoors
- Make sure your cat or dog always has access to safe spaces. Actively supervise dogs and children

Take your time, don’t rush your pet, and use positive training methods, using treats or play.

Professional Help

For any behavioural concerns contact your vet to ensure there are no underlying medical issues.

Qualified trainers and behaviourists can be found at [www.abtc.org.uk/practitioner-directory](http://www.abtc.org.uk/practitioner-directory)

You can get more advice from charities: [RSPCA](https://www rspca.org.uk), [PDSA](https://www.pdsa.org.uk), [Cats Protection](https://www.cats-protection.org.uk), [Dogs Trust](https://www.dogstrust.org.uk), [Battersea](https://www.battersea.org.uk), [Wood Green](https://www.woodgreen.org.uk) and from veterinary associations such as BSAVA who have Q&As for vets and pet owners or via the Kennel Club 01296 318540, Wood Green Pet Support Line 0300 303 9333 or Blue Cross Behaviour helpline 0300 777 1975

Visit the CFSG Pet Advice page
[www.cfsg.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.cfsg.org.uk/coronavirus)