



# How to Collect Video of Your Pet



**Collecting video of pet behaviors can play a critical role in making a diagnosis of a behavior problem, especially when attempting to diagnose separation related distress.** If other behavior problems are suspected, your veterinarian may decide to seek help from a Board-Certified Veterinary Behaviorist. They can then help develop an appropriate management and treatment plan for your pet.

Smart phones and tablets make collecting pet video easier than ever; just follow these instructions to get helpful video in a safe manner.

When separation related problems are suspected, the camera (phone or tablet) should be set up so as to capture the widest possible view around where you leave the house. Even if the dog goes out of view, vocalizations, if present, can still be heard. Typically, the dog will return to the door often enough if they have separation anxiety. If the dog doesn't spend time in that area, try again on another day by aiming the camera at a different area where the dog appears to be going based on the first video, or where you suspect the dog is spending time. It may take a couple of attempts to collect helpful video.

Be aware that everyone must leave the home in order to capture accurate behavior. It does not matter if other pets are home, but your dog knows when you actually leave. You cannot just step outside and then return and spy on them through a window. You have to go at least a mile away from your home, whatever way you typically leave. Many dogs do not reveal the intensity of their distress, until they can no longer hear you.

In most cases, 10-20 minutes of video will help make a diagnosis. However, if you only feel safe collecting 5 minutes of video because you are afraid to leave the dog

longer than that, then that amount of video can still be very useful. Video should never be collected if it puts the dog at risk to harm themselves or someone in the house.

Video should be used later to monitor the results of different treatment strategies, so it is important that you determine what video strategy works for you.

Videos of the dog performing normal day to day activities, such as playing in the yard, eating a meal, taking a walk, playing with a toy or interacting with family members can also be very useful to your veterinarian. By observing the dogs body language in these varying situations, your veterinarian can learn a lot about how the dog views interactions with both known and unknown individuals. Observing how dogs cope with new situations is also very informative. Then, if necessary, your veterinarian can provide detailed instructions for how and what interactions to capture on additional videos.



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When the dog's behavior problem includes aggression to either animals or people, it is critical that you understand there is absolutely no need to get video of your dog performing its aggressive behavior! In these situations, observing the dog behaving normally is actually as revealing and helpful, then seeing it behave in an inappropriate way. It is never worth putting someone in harm's way in order to get video!

Videos of the pets' normal environment and behaviors can be extremely helpful in confirming diagnosis of some behavior problems and in monitoring the results of different treatment strategies. It cannot, however, be overemphasized that video should never be collected if it puts any animal or person at risk of any injury!

