



Tony La Russa's
**Animal
Rescue
Foundation**

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Contact

Erin Thompson, Marketing Manager
925-296-3103 | press@arflife.org

Returning to the Office Soon? Prepare Your Pet Now.

Many of us have been working from home for two months under the shelter-in-place mandate, but as we prepare to return to the office, we must also prepare our companion animals.

Your pet has grown accustomed to having you home – it's part of their new routine. Adjusting to your sudden absence could cause stress and undesirable behaviors. Adding daily training into your pet's routine now, will help them tremendously in the weeks and months to come as shelter-in-place orders are lifted.

Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation recommends training your pet to get accustomed to spending time by themselves with the goals of 1) proving to your pet that they are safe, and 2) showing them that alone time can be fun! With proper management and training, separation anxiety can be avoided. Here are several suggestions for you to start implementing now:

Low-Key Departures and Arrivals

During the 10 to 15 minutes before you leave the house or when you arrive home, strive for a calm, neutral atmosphere. Avoid hugging, kissing, petting, or high energy play. We know it's very hard, but it is best to simply ignore your pet for 10 to 15 minutes.

Long-Lasting Treats & Food Games

Experiment with long-lasting treats and creative feeding methods for your pet's meals. You'll want to test these out before you actually leave your pet home alone with them. If your dog or cat doesn't eat the food when you're around, they likely won't eat it when left alone. When you find a treat your pet especially loves, only give it to them before departing the home. This will keep the treat extra special.

Some ideas include: food dispensing toys, food puzzles, interactive feeding mats (like snuffle mats), and hiding kibble/treats in cardboard or paper products that your pet can tear apart (like cereal boxes, paper towel rolls, egg cartons, or paper bags)

Practice Alone Time

Practicing being alone is important for all pets. Identify a comfortable, safe area for your pet to be alone. This might be in a room, an area separated by a baby gate, or in a dog crate (if crate trained).

At least once a day, set your pet up with a long-lasting treat, some of their favorite toys, a comfy bed, and water. Start by only leaving them alone for short periods of time (even just for a few minutes). You can vary between leaving them completely alone and sitting nearby while not engaging. Vary the length of absences so it's not predictable (pets can get very good at keeping time!).

Watch Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation's training videos for more ways to prepare your pet at <https://arflife.org/training-videos>.

About Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF)

ARF's core mission is the rescue of dogs and cats who have run out of time at public shelters, giving them a chance at life until a new home can be found. ARF couples this focus with innovative programs strengthening the human-animal bond for children, seniors, veterans, and people in disadvantaged circumstances. Through ARF, people experience the unconditional love and acceptance of dogs and cats to fulfill a mission of People Rescuing Animals ... Animals Rescuing People®. www.arflife.org

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