SEPARATION ANXIETY

Dogs that become destructive when their owner is away suffer from a behavior disorder called “Separation Anxiety.” What this term refers to is the fear of being left alone. From a dog’s perspective he has been left by the other members of the pack. In the dog world there is safety in numbers, so being left alone, even if it is in the comfort of your world can be a frightening experience for some dogs.

The following is a very basic outline to offer some help to you and your dog:

1. **Confinement**: Try to solve this problem by looking at it through your dog’s eyes. While many people dislike the idea of using a crate to confine a dog, dogs actually like the sense of security the crate offers them. This is a place they may call their own, their den. Remember you are trying to give your dog a sense of security with the use of the crate, at no time should you use the crate as a form of punishment.

2. **Exercise**: A tired dog will want to rest. The destructive actions of dogs suffering from separation anxiety release the stress and panic the dog who has just been left alone feels. Try to play with your dog before you leave. Games like retrieve, Frisbee, chase with YOU as the object of the catch. If weather permits, jogging and swimming are good ways to exercise your pet. Be sure to clear the exercise program with your veterinarian. The well exercised dog will want to nap rather than destroy your house.

3. **Greetings**: It is common for us to try to reassure our dog that we will be back and remind him to be good while we are away. Now let’s think about this as though we were the dog. He never hears you use this tone of voice unless you leave him - now the feeling of panic takes over. This part is all up to you, avoid using the reassuring (pleading) voice that tells your dog that you are about to leave. The same holds true upon your return. As hard as it seems ignore your dog for a minute of two until the excitement over your return wears off. You want your departures and arrivals to be no big deal to your dog.

4. **Obedience**: Only good comes from obedience training. It strengthens the bond between you and your dog. IT HELPS TO INSTILL CONFIENCE IN DOGS SUFFERING FROM SEPEARATION ANXIETY.

There is no quick fix to this behavior problem.
It will take time and commitment on your part to help your dog feel safe and secure when you are away from home.