

**ANIMAL  
RESCUE  
LEAGUE  
of BOSTON**



*A champion for animals*

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## **Back to School and Work – the Impact on Animals**

*Shifting from summer to fall routines may increase pet anxiety*

The Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) is reminding pet owners that as we begin our fall routines which include going back to school and work, it may increase our pet's anxiety.

Animals are much more in tune with us than you would think, and when we are back to rushing around to get out the door in the morning you may see some signs of anxiety develop in your pet – particularly dogs and cats.

This time of year, pets may follow you around more, become needier, and develop some other behavioral issues including: depression; excessive barking; house soiling; as well as destructive behavior.

Before pet owners get frustrated, ARL offers the following 7 tips that pet owners can build into morning and evening routines that can help alleviate their anxiety:

- Along with a morning walk, build in a five-minute play session and be sure to add in a special treat. When you leave the house, do not give a big “goodbye” as this could add to the animal's anxiety when you leave.
- Before you leave, give your dog a food-stuffed toy or food puzzle to distract them for the initial half hour after you leave. For cats, give them a perch where they can distract themselves by watching birds and the outside world; or hide pieces of dry food around the house to give them another activity.

- Leaving a radio on can also work wonders. Hearing voices or soft music can ease your pet's anxiety and assure them that they're not alone.
- For dogs, a dog-walking service can provide a wonderful mid-day break and offer interaction with people. If you're away from home for more than 8 hours, a doggie daycare facility may also be worth looking into. Keep in mind these facilities are currently not regulated in Massachusetts so it's up to pet owners to do their research – start with ARL's [Board Safely](#) guidelines to help make a smart choice.
- When you get home, set aside 10 minutes to play with your pet. For cats, bring out some special toys and get them moving, and at the end of the session a special treat or some catnip to roll around in makes them even happier!
- Dogs are natural greeters, so when you arrive home, it's important to reward them for calm behavior rather than talking, touching or making eye contact when they're at the highest point of excitement. They will learn to self soothe their excitement and calm down quicker when you arrive home, again helping their anxiety and stress.
- After dinner interaction with the entire family is also important to let them know they're loved and important.

Pets have amazing, individual personalities, and if you get to a point where your pet's behavior is becoming a concern, the Animal Rescue League of Boston offers a free behavior helpline to answer questions about dogs, cats, and small animals. For assistance, call (617) 226-5666, or email [behaviorhelpline@arlboston.org](mailto:behaviorhelpline@arlboston.org).

#### **ABOUT THE ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BOSTON:**

***The Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) is an unwavering champion for animals in need, committed to keeping them safe and healthy in habitats and homes.*** Founded in 1899, ARL provides high-quality veterinary care, adoption, and rescue services; while also confronting the root causes of animal cruelty and neglect through innovative community programs, police investigations, and public advocacy. In 2022, ARL served 20,601 animals throughout Massachusetts. ARL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. The Animal Rescue League of Boston does not receive government grants or public funding and relies on the generosity of our supporters to help animals in need. For more information please visit us online at [arlboston.org](http://arlboston.org); and be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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