

# Pet Boredom Busters!

How to help your pet get used to the new fall routine. BY NICOLE PAJER



**WIN IT!**  
See page 127



## COMBAT LONELINESS

With everyone out of the house this time of year, Fido or Fluffy may get the blues. Designate a set of toys he can play with only while you're away, so he doesn't mind his time alone.

»**TRY THIS:** Cats will love the **Scratch and Play Tower Track** (\$25, [petstages.com](http://petstages.com)). Offer dogs a school-themed plush toy (\$3-\$4, [petsmart.com](http://petsmart.com)).



## FILL THE SILENCE

To calm your dog's nerves, play music to mimic the household noises she's used to hearing when you're at home. Research shows that instrumental music is especially soothing for dogs.

»**TRY THIS:** Turn on the **Relax My Dog Spotify playlist** (free, [spotify.com](http://spotify.com)) for a full day of relaxing music and nature sounds.



## KEEP IN TOUCH

When your pet realizes you're not around, he could become lonely and bark or howl for you. But your voice may put him at ease. Research shows that dogs and cats can recognize an owner's voice, even without seeing or smelling her, and dogs can tell if you're praising them. If your pet hears you speak, he'll relax.

»**TRY THIS:** Fire up the **Motorola Scout66** (\$99, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)), which turns your smartphone, tablet, or computer into a two-way audio and visual pet monitor.



## PLAN YOUR EXIT

Pets can be the most destructive in the first five minutes after you leave. Your secret weapon? Distraction. Spray catnip, a scented herb, on your cat's toy to entertain her. Fill a plastic toy with peanut butter to busy your dog while you're away.

»**TRY THIS:** **Petstages Catnip Spray**, \$7, [petco.com](http://petco.com). **Kong Peanut Butter Easy Treat**, \$10, [chewy.com](http://chewy.com).



**WIN IT!**  
See page 127

## STAY INVOLVED

Even when school and work activities stretch late, you should still try to carve out some time for your dog. Exercising with your pet is beneficial to your bonding and helps him get rid of excess energy.

»**TRY THIS:** Use the **fiber-optic NiteyLeash** (\$25, [niteyleash.com](http://niteyleash.com)) to light your path and so both you and your pup are visible.



**WIN IT!**  
See page 127



In small doses, catnip is safe for cats and dogs, though most canines don't experience the same effects.