

# How to Leave Your Dog at Home (even though you don't want to)

by [Victoria Schade](#)

Leaving your dog behind when you travel can stress out even the most frequent of fliers.

I've got my first vacation in two years on the horizon. I'm excited, but it's tempered with worry because of the dog situation.

For the past ten-plus years, old man Sumner has either stayed with my parents or my sister-in-law when we traveled. Our absence was keenly felt, I'm sure, but the familiarity of their homes and routines probably made his week of "boarding" less stressful for him. This time, my parents are coming with us, and my sister-in-law now lives three hours away.

Our solution is a pretty darn good one: Sumner and Millie will be staying with a dear friend and fellow dog trainer. She's got two sweet pooches and dog-sense out the wazoo, so I know that Mill and Sum are in the best possible hands. (I'd wager even better than my family members!) So why the worry?

Millie is an "adventure dog", used to meeting new people, dogs and situations daily. The girl can hang, so I'm not concerned about her at all. Old Man Sum, on the other hand, likes predictability. To him, "change" is a four-letter word. Plus, he's a Mama's boy (yes, I consider myself a dog Mom). Add to that his dicey back legs and you can call me a worried vacationer.

Leaving your dog behind when you travel can stress out even the most frequent of fliers. We worry that our dogs won't eat, that they'll miss us, that their care won't be up to par, or that something terrible and unpredictable will happen while we're away. (Not to add fuel to the fire, but a regular customer just lost her dog when he jumped from his caregiver's arms and was hit by a car on her first day away.) It can be difficult to let go and immerse yourself in vacation while thinking about Fido. Some folks refuse to travel without their dogs, and some refuse to travel *at all* because of their dogs!

I took Millie and Sumner to visit their home-away-from-home to ease my conscience and make the drop-off next week less stressful.

Millie made friends with the resident dogs and tried out the agility equipment in the yard. Sumner stood next to me and panted until he had foamy rivulets hanging from his mouth. Yes, he was nervous, but I was able to envision how he'll relax and eventually settle in with the other dogs during our absence. I'm sure my very capable friend will update me regularly. Deep breaths . . . it's going to be fine.



Victoria Schade has been a dog trainer for over eleven years. During that time she has worked on television shows like Animal Planet's annual Puppy Bowl, The Puppy Games, and the Smithsonian Channel's special, "Animals Aloft." She has been the featured trainer on the television show "Faithful Friends" for two seasons. Victoria created the puppy training DVD, "New Puppy! Now What?" to assist overwhelmed puppy owners, and wrote "Bonding with your Dog: A Trainer's Secrets for Building a Better Relationship" to help dogs and their people create a stronger connection.