

# Home Alone

Before getting into the fun activities, a real consideration for your pets in the lead up to Christmas is possibly being left on their own for longer than usual, during the day or evening.

Of course, all animals need company during the day and some, such as cats, can be more independent than other animals, like dogs – especially if they have free access to both indoors and outdoors.

We wouldn't recommend that dogs are left on their own for more than 4 hours on a regular basis, and we know that some dogs can be anxious of being left alone at all. So, now is the time to consider if there are any times or events leading up to or over Christmas where you might need to make special provision for your pet and get it organised.

Sometimes, this can be relatively easy – Do you have any friends or neighbours who also have a pet that can pet sit for you, and you for them? Having a reciprocal arrangement with someone you & your pet is familiar with means everyone can have a fun outing with less of the worry!

If you simply cannot find anyone to dog sit over the festive period, why not invite the party to come to you? It can be daunting for some dogs when there are visitors, especially if they arrive with their own pets & children (who can be noisy and not understand our pets' boundaries), or who are generally just worried about people in their home.

Always make sure that your animal companions have somewhere quiet that they can escape to, even if they seem fine with guests. This can be as simple as providing a baby-gated area where they can go, but still safely be close to the activities if they wish.

Or, if it is an adult-only gathering and your dog is used to that, make sure they have access to a covered, open crate, where everyone knows to leave your four-legged friends to relax if they are using their space.

Some dogs can be more worried by people and may need more space to escape from both noise & visual stimuli. For those friends, we would recommend seeking veterinary or clinical behaviour advice.

