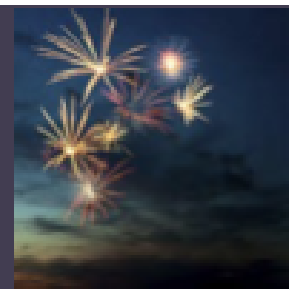


Noise Phobias In Pets

How To Take The Bang Out Of Bonfire Night



Bonfire night can be a terrifying time for pets. Unfortunately the number of days over which fireworks are let off is on the rise, with New Year also being a prime time for noisy celebrations. Although we tend to notice noise phobias more in our pet dogs, other animals can be equally vulnerable and steps can be taken to reduce the stress for all of our furry friends.

Signs of phobias in dogs include things such as tail-tucking, hiding, howling, trembling, pacing, excessive drooling, panting, chewing, licking, destructive behaviour, defecating or urinating in the house, lap-sitting and vocalising (barking, crying, whining).

Here are some do's and don'ts on how to manage noise phobias:

- **Don't** punish an animal when it is scared as this only confirms that there was something to be afraid of
- **Do** ignore any fearful behaviour that occurs for no good reason
- **Don't** fuss over a dog when it is scared, as this rewards the behaviour. Try to stay calm and jolly as this helps to counteract their fear
- **Do** make sure pets are kept in a safe and secure environment at all times so they can't bolt and escape if a sudden noise occurs. The use of pheromones such as Adaptil® for dogs, and Feliway® for cats, can help provide an emotionally secure environment

For other pets similar measures can be taken to provide a den-like area with blankets for noise-dampening and darkening.



Thunder jackets can help reduce anxiety in dogs by providing a swaddling-type effect. Gentle pressure can help them feel more secure.



Providing a safe and secure retreat can give them somewhere to hide and help them cope. Creating a den, with toys to play with, can create a positive environment. Using blankets to cover it and duvets inside can reduce the impact of bright lights and loud noises.

Putting some music on with repetitive drum beats can help, it doesn't have to be loud as long as there is a constant distracting beat to the music. If any noise is too much for the dog then earplugs can be carefully constructed out of damp cotton wool (take care they aren't too small to fall into the ear and make sure they are removed straight after the event!).

Enlisting the help of a dog which isn't afraid of loud noises can help - playing with a non-fearful dog may help to persuade the fearful dog that things aren't so bad after all!



Drugs can be useful in dogs, used in conjunction with the other methods mentioned above. They should always be used under Veterinary supervision. Ideally they should be given so they take effect before any noise starts or panic sets in.

Please see your Vet for further advice!