

Fireworks & Dogs


A BRIEF GUIDE




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While 5th of November can be loads of fun for us humans, the loud bangs and smoky smells can be absolutely terrifying for many dogs.



As responsible dog guardians, we all know how important it is to be prepared.

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CELEBRATE
WITHOUT
TEARS!





The period around November 5th is often the most dreaded time for the animal community. Sometimes the fireworks can start as early as Halloween and go all the way through to New Years Eve. Some dogs run away from their home in a desperate attempt to escape the sounds of the fireworks, others go missing, and some are tragically killed.

As a Dog Professional, I want to educate and empower you with the knowledge you need to prepare your dog for a safe fireworks season.

This is a free e-book, please share so that we can help spread the word.

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KNOW YOUR DOG

Protect your dog during fireworks season.
And also from any scary sounds such as thunder,
it's never too early to prepare your dog.

**With training, you
can help desensitise
your dog to become
less afraid.**

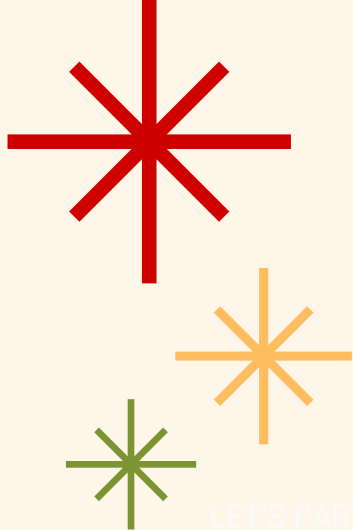
Why Dogs are Scared



Your dog's acute hearing makes him more sensitive to the sounds of fireworks than you are. During fireworks, your dog experiences the same kind of startled response you do, when you're surprised by a loud noise. This may mean an increase in heart rate, a rush of adrenaline, and an increase in stress hormones circulating through the body.

Studies have shown that over 50% of dogs are noise-sensitive. Running away from the noise is a survival instinct. Even if dogs don't have a noise-sensitivity they can react to fireworks as they are more vibrant and are accompanied by sudden booms, whistles, flashes and strange smells. Dogs have an incredible sense of smell, scientists estimate 10000-100000 more acute than ours, which is hard to comprehend so if you use sight as a comparison - if we can see 1/3 mile away, then dogs can see 3000 miles away





LET'S PARTY!

CREATE A SAFE PLACE

Best case scenario you stay with your dog throughout the period and snuggle up watching a movie. But, if you can't be with them, be sure you create them a safe place.

Every dog should have a safe place anyway that they can retreat to, if they need a sleep, escape the children or get away from the general bustle of everyday home life.

It is important to educate all family members that this is your dog's space, and not to disturb them when they take themselves off there. If it is frequently invaded it will never feel safe to them.

My older dog will always take himself off to our bathroom which has no windows and is in the centre of the house when thunder starts. He also prefers his everyday bed under the breakfast bar



Location

Your dog may already have their space, but if not, observe where they go when they want to be alone. This may be under a table, under the stairs, behind the sofa or in their crate (if you use one). Let them choose, then make it special for them.

It is best if this area is away from windows or you are able to pull the blinds/curtains so they are unable to see the fireworks.

Comforting Items

Ensure they have a soft mat/bed, their favourite toy and so they associate it with being a positive area give them a kong or lickimat with pate or soft cheese on. If you are trying to help your dog just for the fireworks season then you need to start doing this many months before the fireworks start.

Play White Noise

Try leaving on a fan, Dog TV, or soothing music that can help mask the sounds of the fireworks. There are many radio stations that specialise in classical, reggae or jazz that have a calming effects for dogs. All dogs are different and some won't like music. If you are someone who plays music a lot, this will be familiar to them and something they associate with you being home so whatever you normally play may help.

What is white, pink and brown noise?

White noise creates a blanket of sounds that masks changes and inconsistency by creating equal power across all the noise frequencies. Frequency refers to how fast sound waves vibrate per second

Pink noise has reduced higher frequencies so that low frequencies sound louder and high frequencies sound softer and less shrill.

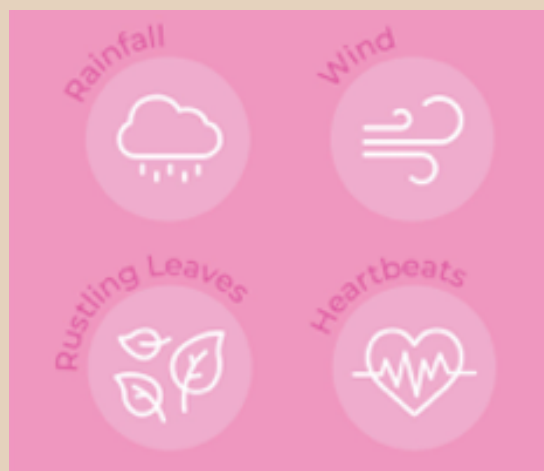
Brown noise lowers frequencies further, so there are no high frequencies and it sounds rougher.

White noise examples



Also sprinkling rain, a gentle stream and radio hiss

Pink noise examples



Also ocean waves

Brown noise examples



Images taken from <https://yogasleep.com>

White noise can improve memory and concentration.
It can be used as an aid to manage tinnitus.

Pink noise can improve both long term memory and recall of events the next day.
One trial showed participants remembered 3 x as much information the next day
when they slept with **pink** noise compared to those who did not.

Pink noise has been shown to increase slow-wave sleep. Some elements of memory
are dependent on spending adequate amounts of time in slow-wave sleep so it
makes sense it could improve memory.

Pink noise helps you to fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer

Brown noise increases relaxation and focus and has been used to manage stress
and anxiety in humans.

Link if you want to try it - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJMnIfd6Lcg> - 1 hour
of **brown** noise

Pink and **brown** noise are considered more soothing than **white** noise.

White, **pink** or **brown** noise can also be used as part of a behaviour modification
programme for separation anxiety

A link which compares the three types
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rb0M5cCdoPg>

I have one dog who is scared of thunder,
another who is scared of both and one
who just takes advantage of the additional
Firework and Thunder strategy in our
household of bed snuggles.



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A Brief Fireworks Desensitisation Programme

DO THIS EVERY DAY, STARTING MANY MONTHS BEFORE THE SEASON.

To begin, prepare your dog's favourite high-value reinforcement treats. Get some good stuff out! Ham, sausage or cheese!

Start playing firework sounds at a **very** low volume, almost undetectable, (you can purchase a CD which offers graduated sounds or just download from youtube).

Monitor your dog's body language for any signs of stress: Lip/nose licking, yawning, not taking food, head turn, paw lift, ears back, tail tuck or whale eye.

After (timing is vital) each firework sound offer a high-value treat to your dog. Do short sessions each day. Work at your dog's pace. Do not increase the volume or duration of the sounds until your dog is content at the current level.

If your dog appears nervous or worried, lower the volume or move away from the sound source.

During the programme alternate with games such as fetch, human play, tug, or even take it on the road for a sniffari adventure.



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FREE DESENSITISATION PROGRAMMES

SOUNDS SCARY

Provided by the Dogs Trust. This will help guide you through the whole process step by step.

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/dog-behaviour-health/sound-therapy-for-pets>



ZYLKENE

Zylkene also has a free sound desensitisation/sound therapy programme.

<https://zylkenepet.co.uk/help-advice/sound-desensitisation/>



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HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE DAYS BEFORE THE 5TH OF NOVEMBER

Top three tips to prepare:

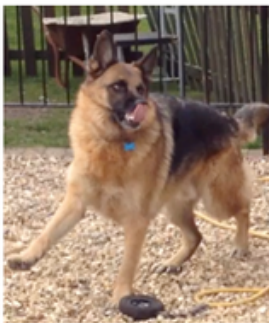
1. Exercise- Provide your dog with breed specific exercise to help drain your dog's energy. Be sure not to expose your dog to anything that can have your dog in the red- zone.
2. Interactive Feeders- Prepare some frozen feeders that keep your dog occupied little longer than their usual meal time. Challenge your dog mentally with some new enrichment ideas.
3. Training- Using a combination of your dogs meal and some higher value treats you will want to do some training and focus games to help mentally challenge your dog before the festival day.

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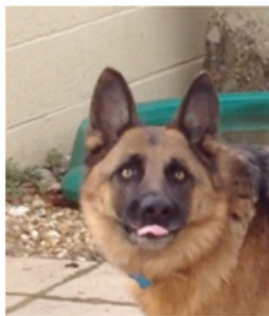
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PRACTICAL ADVICE TO SUPPORT YOUR DOG



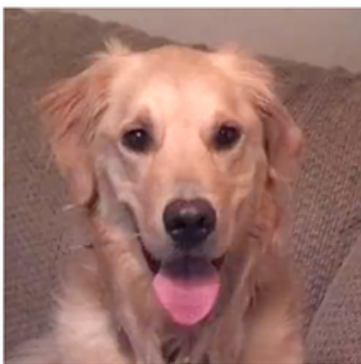
Nose lick



Tongue flick



Whale eye



Tense face, spatulate tongue



Yawning and sniffing



KNOW YOUR DOG -Brush up on your canine body language skills, so that you can recognise their signs of stress:

Excessive panting, shaking, pacing, drooling, trying to escape, hiding in tight spaces, refusing food, unexpected toileting accidents, whale eye, desperate whining and barking are all signs that your dog is suffering.

TTOUCH

If your dog is comfortable with touch then Tellington TTouch is a great way to help them feel calm, release tension and relax. It is easy to learn how to do. I include it as part of my signature programmes.



SAFETY ISSUES



Ensure your dog's harness/collar has tags with your phone numbers on and keep your dog **on a lead** when outside. Put your dog's equipment on before opening the front or back door. Make sure your dogs is **microchipped** and the registration is up-to-date with your current contact information. Contact your vet if needed to schedule this before the Season.

You may want to buy a **Pet Tracker & Activity Monitor** that tells you how much activity and rest your dog is getting and tracks their progress with customised goals set by you. Adult dogs need approx 12-14 hours sleep a day and puppies 18-20 hours.

There are many that you can attach to your dogs collar so just in case your dog gets out you can track immediately.

Video-cams can be purchased inexpensively and allow you to keep an eye on your dog via wifi with your phone when you are out. This enables you to return if your dog shows any signs of stress.



SOME OTHER PRODUCTS

There are many products on the market that **claim** to help with anxiety and though evidence is limited in some cases as to their effectiveness, some have worked, for some clients.

I include these in this e-book for information and do not endorse or recommend them.

They will have limited use if used alone, without a desensitisation programme.

The ADAPTIL Calm Home Diffuser Kit provides dog appeasing pheromones (that mimic a mother's nursing pheromones) that can help some dogs feel calm and relaxed in situations like loud noises (thunderstorms and fireworks), being home alone, traveling or other fearful situations. This also comes in a collar.

<https://www.adaptil.com/uk>



Always discuss with your vet before giving your dog any products, as they know your dog's medical history.

Other Products

Pet Remedy uses a blend of essential oils (valerian based) which can be sprayed on a bandanna or bedding. It is quite strong smelling.



Bach Flower Rescue Remedy contains 5 flower remedies; Impatiens for impatience, irritability and agitation, Clematis for faintness and detachment, Rock Rose for terror, panic and hysteria, Cherry Plum for loss of self control and Star of Bethlehem for trauma and grief. <https://www.rescueremedy.com/en-us/range/all-products/rescue-remedy-pet>

Zylkene is derived from milk protein. It contains a peptide that promotes relaxation of newborns after breastfeeding.



Always discuss with your vet before giving your dog any products, as they know your dog's medical history.

Other Products

Other herbal products, most containing Valerian

Herbal remedies can interact with other medications and have an adverse effect on your dog.



Thundershirts or wraps help to reduce anxiety by providing a constant gentle pressure, like being cuddled. If you decide to use these, get your dog used to it beforehand by introducing it gradually.

<https://thundershirt.com/collections/all-dogs/products/thundershirt-for-dogs>

ThunderShirt's gentle pressure calms and relaxes your dog, like swaddling an infant or providing a calming hug.



1 Lay the ThunderShirt on your dog's back and attach the neck straps loosely.



2 Wrap the torso flaps around your dog's chest.



3 Adjust the top flap down for a snug and comfortable fit.

Always discuss with your vet before giving your dog any products, as they know your dog's medical history.

MEDICATION & SUPPLEMENTS

As a dog professional who prefers a holistic approach to dog parenting, I prefer management & training to medication, even if that means you miss the fireworks, **however**

If your dog has an extreme phobia and you wonder if prescription medication can help...

SPEAK TO YOUR VET



Need More Help with fears and phobias?

CONTACT FOR MORE
PERSONALISED GUIDANCE.



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