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DOG RESCUE**

Charity number:
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FIREWORK SEASON ADVICE





HELPING WITH

1. Create a safe space

This may be a crate, covered table or their favourite place to sleep. It should be somewhere that they feel safe and comfortable, blankets will help! Don't confine your dog to this space however, as this may make them more stressed.

2. Don't go outside during displays

Walk your dog before it gets dark and if you know when a display is due to start. When toileting your dog in the garden, try to take them out before and keep them inside until it is over but keep them on a lead in case of stray bangs.

3. Block out and mask sound

Make sure windows and doors are closed to muffle the sound and attempt to mask it with calming music or the TV.

4. Close curtains

Closing curtains and blinds will block the flashes from the fireworks which may be alarming for some dogs.

5. Use special treats

Try giving your dog long lasting treats that encourage licking and chewing. Stuffed Kongs, frozen Likimats or pigs ears are good options.

YOUR DOG DEALING WITH FIREWORKS

6. Be aware of when displays are happening

Check local platforms and talk to neighbours to find out when local displays are occurring so you can be as prepared as possible.

7. Stay calm yourself and offer reassurance.

Our dogs are so in tune with us that they can often tell when we are worried which can add to their stress. Offer them calm reassurance and keep your routine as normal as possible.

8. Prepare for worst case scenario

Hopefully it won't happen but it is better to be prepared. Make sure your dog's microchip and tag information is up to date and that your house and garden are fully secure in case your dog spooks and bolts.

9. Calming pheromones

Make use of pheromone diffusers and sprays, such as Adaptil, which encourage calm behaviour in your dog.

10. Talk to your vet

If your dog has extreme firework anxiety, it is a good idea to talk to your vet as they may be able to prescribe anti-anxiety medication.





SIGNS

Your dog may make it very obvious to you that they find fireworks worrying or they may be giving you more subtle signs that you could easily miss. Here are some of the signs to look for.



Most people can recognise a **tucked tail** as a sign of nervousness in dogs but repetitive **yawning** can also be a signal that your dog is not comfortable in the situation. This may be paired with other signs like **pacing** and **trembling**.

Pinned ears are an obvious stress signal but you may also notice that your dog has **dilated pupils** or **whale eye**, when a dog shows the whites of their eyes, which are more subtle signs.



OF STRESS



You may notice your dog **nose and lip licking**. When this behaviour is not linked to food (i.e. your dog has not just eaten or is not anticipating getting food) this is a sign that your dog is feeling worried. Excessive panting, usually with a curled tongue tip, is another easily spotted signal of stress.

If your dog is experiencing prolonged stress, for example multiple nights of fireworks, it may have a wider effect on their body. For example you might notice your dog has **diarrhoea** or a **loss of appetite**.



Your dog may show one or a combination of these signs, which is why it is important to have knowledge of your dog's behaviour so we can understand how they are feeling and what we can do to help.



MAKE LESS

Desensitisation is a training technique used to make dogs less fearful of a stimulus, in this case fireworks. The aim is to establish a neutral or positive association with the stimulus by introducing it at a reduced level and creating a more positive association by using treats and praise, gradually increasing the stimulus in this manner until the dog is comfortable with it at a realistic level.

There are many useful soundscapes on Youtube or Spotify that contain firework sounds, select a few to use for your training which contain all the different kinds of firework sounds your dog may experience. The key with this technique is to go at your dog's pace, therefore, it is best to start the process many months before firework season begins.

During this time, you will gradually build up the volume of the firework sounds. It is best to keep these sessions regular and short, a minimum of once a day. Even when your dog is comfortable with these noises, it can be beneficial to do sporadic refresher sessions through the year, at times when fireworks are less common, to reinforce the positive association.

Carry out the sessions at time when your dog is nice and relaxed. Begin by playing one of these firework display soundscapes at a very low volume so that it is barely audible. You are looking for a animal, calm reaction (your dog is visibly aware of the noise for a



FIREWORKS SCARY

few seconds, their ears may move towards the sound, but attention quickly shifts back to you or what they were previously doing) after which you reinforce your dog with a treat. If your dog reacts fearfully, end the session and begin again the next day at a reduced volume.

Leave the soundscape at this volume and stop playing it as soon as your dog has finished its treat or after 5 minutes max, whichever comes first. Keep playing the sounds at this volume in the following sessions until there is no reaction at all from your dog, this is your cue to increase the volume slightly to the point where, again, your dog notices the sound but does not react. This may be the next session or may take a number of weeks, each dog will progress at their own pace. Continuing with this process will allow you to make small gradual increases in volume while your dog remains calm.

Eventually your dog will show no reaction to the fireworks when at a volume which would be realistic, they may even get excited as they now associate it with getting their favourite treat!





KEEPING YOUR DOG OCCUPIED

Here are some suggestions of long-lasting enrichment and treats that can keep your pooch occupied to distract them from the fireworks.



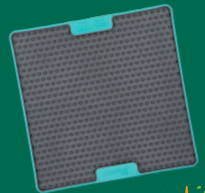
Tip: Treats which encourage licking and chewing stimulate your dog's body to release calming hormones.



Natural chews like pigs ears, yak sticks and horns will last a long time and are good for their dental health. Avoid raw hide chews and bones as these can cause digestive obstructions.



If you have time to pre-prepare then frozen treats like stuffed Kongs and Lickimats are a great option.



For some recipe ideas and enrichment makes you can find our Enrichment Cookbook in our online shop at:

www.jerrygreendogs.org.uk/shop