



# How to help your pet during the fireworks' season



If your pet has a firework or noise phobia, preparation and knowing what to do is vital if they are going to get through firework night and similar events with the minimum of fear and stress. Try following these guidelines to help your pet.



### Two weeks before a firework event

1. Create a refuge for your dog – a special place where your dog can go to get away from the sounds he hates. He may already have a favourite room but if not then choose a room that is naturally quiet, located towards the centre of the house and with as few windows as possible. Put lots of blankets for your dog to dig/ burrow in, and maybe an old jumper of yours so the dog can be comforted by your scent.

dog at all times, and it is vital to cannot accidentally shut and

The refuge should be accessible to your make sure doors are fixed so that they trap the pet inside or out of the room. Let cats hide way – they often like to go



high up or hide behind something.



2. Plug in a ADAPTIL® for dogs and Feliway® for cats. These plug-in products produce pheromones that mimic natural pet hormones helping to reassure and comfort your pet.

3. Consider using a natural calming agent such as Yucalm. Talk to your vet about these.



4. Anti-anxiety medication may be necessary in some cases but should only be used under veterinary supervision. Again, talk to your vet about these treatments.

### On the day of the event

1. When the season begins try to move your dog to a blacked out room at sundown with toys etc for them and preferably things for you to do as well, so they are not abandoned in the room. Blacking out the room removes potential additional problems from flashing lights etc. Keep cats indoors, ideally all day, or at least from afternoon onwards. Ensure adequate litter trays are available to them.

2. Make sure your pet is always kept in a safe and secure environment, so that they do not bolt and escape if a sudden noise occurs.

### Fireworks Top Tip:

Make sure that all doors and windows are securely closed to prevent your cat from escaping.



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3. Provide bowls of food and water and a few special chews or treats in case your pet fancies something chewy to reduce their tension. Let your dog go outside to the toilet at least an hour before any planned firework display.

4. Put some music on, if your pet (and you) can tolerate it, rap or something with a lot of constant drumbeats is best. It doesn't have to be very loud as long as there is a constant distracting beat to the music

5. Don't punish your pet when they are

scared; it will only make them more frightened.

6. It is tempting to try and soothe your pet to relieve their fears, but this is the worst thing to do. It gives your pet the impression that there is something to be frightened of, and reward them for being scared. Also, if your pet comes to think of you as the only person who can soothe the fears then they may panic if there are fireworks when you aren't around to help.

7. Ignore the noises yourself and try to engage your pet in some form of active game. Try to appear happy and unconcerned.

8. If you know of a dog that is not scared by the noises and gets on with your own dog then keeping the two together during the evenings may help. Playing with the non-fearful dog if your own dog becomes scared may help to encourage the fearful dog that all is not so bad after all.



### After the event

1. Leave the ADAPTIL<sup>®</sup> or Feliway<sup>®</sup> diffuser plugged in for one week.

2. If it is likely that similar events will happen several times in the same period, maintain a D.A.P.<sup>®</sup> or Feliway<sup>®</sup> diffuser during the whole period.

3. Don't just ignore the problem because it only happens once or twice a year. Ideally we need to reduce your dog's fear so that it can cope with any loud noise at any time of the year. Many dogs can be treated using behavioural methods called desensitisation and counter-conditioning. Specially made recordings of fireworks can be used to train dogs not to react to the noises they fear and a CD with full instructions called "Sounds Scary" is available from us or can be downloaded at <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/dog-behaviour-health/sound-therapy-for-pets>

