

## Noise Phobias and Your Pet

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The booming of thunder, the loud fireworks, and even the sound of lawn mowers can cause some pets to have severe anxiety. They turn from calm and friendly house pets into trembling, panting, panic-stricken pets looking for any place to hide or any path to get away from the offending noise. Since animals have much more sensitive hearing than people, they can pick up the noises when we ourselves are not aware of anything. Many animals will become so agitated that no person or place in the house can settle them down and often times, these pets will bolt from owners through screen doors or from a leash in their attempt to get away from the noise.

A complete exam by your veterinarian should be performed to rule out medical problems such as ear infections. Ear infections can cause pain secondary to loud noises, so you will want to make sure that is not an issue with your pet.

Initially, obedience classes should be considered (for at least 3 months) to improve and refine an owner's handling skills as well as improve the dog's confidence. Often times with the suggestions and techniques acquired in obedience classes, the problem is much easier to control.

When a loud noise does occur, it is important owners stay calm. An option is for an owner to try to switch the animal's attention to something else. Whether it is something like a toy, food, or other activity, some of these tools can motivate the pet to become calm. When it's a sudden noise that frightens her, try to react to that noise with a happy tone in your voice. If you can anticipate the noise, of course you can be ready. If you can actually control when the noise will happen, you can do some repetitions with your happy voice, giving your pet a task to do with you, then praise and reward.

You may also consider consulting with your veterinarian about medication on a temporary basis. Even if you used it from November to January, that's not such a long time, compared to the fact that some dogs will crash through doors and windows and become lost in fear of fireworks.

Please contact our office if you feel your pet has this problem or any other behavior related issues. We can help.

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