

Factsheet 1. Suggestions for Coping with Sound Sensitivity

1. The Body Wrap / T-shirt.

The wrap appears to have a cumulative effect. The more your dog wears it, the more relaxed they can become. If your dog is afraid of fireworks, you may find it helpful to start putting it on in the evenings during September. Don't worry if you haven't started early. As soon as you get the wrap, put it onto your dog just for a couple of minutes, remove it, then replace it after a short break. This gives them an opportunity to adapt to the new feedback they are getting from their bodies.

Throughout firework season, put the wrap onto your dog as it is getting dark. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR DOG UNATTENDED IN A WRAP.** If you need to leave them, a t-shirt may be a safer option.

Some guardians report that their dogs come to them when they want the wrap putting on.

2. Avoid eye contact

When your dog is unsure about something, they will look to you to see how you are responding to it. If you make eye contact with them at this time, you may confirm that there is something to be anxious about. Avoiding eye-contact will be reassuring & enables your dog to settle down. Not making eye-contact is different to ignoring them. You can still talk in a soothing voice, stroke them or, even better, use TTouch to calm them.

3. Create a safe haven

Place comfortable bedding somewhere safe, warm & dark away from the main household traffic - most animals instinctively go behind a chair or sofa. When they are there, don't pester them - you may be adding to their anxiety. Some people have found that putting a DAP diffuser close to their dog can also help.

4. Supplements

At times of stress, I have found that Skullcap & Valerian tablets (from Dorwest Herbs) invaluable for my own dog. We varied the dosage & timing to find the best ones for Meg, but it's best to start with a half dose & build up. We also supplement with Vitamin B complex (the stress vitamin).

5. Diet

Avoid any foods & treats that have any additives, preservatives or colourants as these can really add to an animals stress levels. If you can, feed 3 times a day during firework season to maintain their blood-sugar levels.

6. Tellington TTouch

TTouch is an easily learnt technique that can have a dramatic effect on your animals wellbeing. Go to www.touchteam.co.uk to find your nearest practitioner or to find a workshop. Tension within your dog's body can cause them to react to situations (such as loud noises); removing this tension using light circular TTouches & reconnecting their brains with their bodies allows them to **think** & cope better in potentially frightening situations.

7. Exercise

Ensure that your dog gets *appropriate* exercise during firework season. Their adrenalin levels will be increased, so avoid all kinds of rushing around (chasing balls, etc), & find ways to stimulate their senses (smell, hearing, sight, etc).

If you have to take your dog out after dark, ensure that they have ID tags on their collar, that the collar is adjusted so it doesn't slip over their head, & consider using a harness or head halter with a double-ended lead attached to both harness & collar, so if they do have a fright & try to wriggle out, you have a second means of holding them. Don't let your dog loose in the garden unless you're 100% sure that they can't get out. A frightened dog won't think about what they're doing & can travel a long way to get away from the source of their fear.

I hope that you are able to enjoy the fireworks without the usual anxiety about your companion.