

Puppy Scared of Sounds

Find out why your puppy is scared of sounds.

Jon Geller, DVM

A. Noise phobias, or fears, are fairly common in dogs, and can develop very suddenly. If your dog has a frightening experience with fireworks or thunderstorms, there can be a life-long response to any sounds, or other triggers, that suggest that thunderstorms or fireworks are coming. Remember that your dog has a very sensitive sense of hearing, and may be listening to subtle or distant noises that you cannot hear.

Its not uncommon for some dogs to go absolutely crazy during thunderstorms or fireworks. Dogs have been known to chew through doors, fences, crates and drywall to escape, and often injure themselves in doing so.

Some dogs are also very sensitive to the negative electrical charge in that occurs before or after storms. It is theorized that they may go into bathtubs or shower stalls to be near metal plumbing that can help ground them.

To help your dog get over her phobia, you should desensitize her to loud sounds. Consider getting a tape or CD of a thunderstorm that you play when you are home, and positively reward your dog when she chills out while it is playing. You should avoid leaving her home alone during thunderstorms or fireworks.

In worst-case scenarios, you may have to ask your veterinarian for a tranquilizer, such as acepromazine. Tranquilizers can be effective if given at least 30 minutes prior to the stimulation. Make sure you give your dog a trial dosage of acepromazine under normal conditions, to see how she reacts to the dosage, then work with your veterinarian to make any dosage adjustments. Acepromazine can cause a dangerous drop in blood pressure if overdosed, so it should only be given under the instructions of a veterinarian.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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