

Noise Sensitivity

How to help a dog who reacts badly to loud sounds.

Brought to you by The Original Dog Bible A dogs sense of hearing is far more sensitive than ours, and many dogs become overwhelmed by sudden loud sounds. Fireworks or thunder will make some dogs so anxious that they whine, tremble, and may try to escape. If you can predict which sounds scare your dog, you may be able to reduce his startle reaction by playing music or television fairly loudly in the background. Some dogs do best when made comfortable in the basement during fireworks or thunderstorms. If you are with your dog during those scary times, stay upbeat and act as if you actually like the noise. Don't hover and say, Its okay, its okay, because to a dog that sounds like you're worried, too, and he won't believe things are fine at all. Some dogs can gradually be desensitized to scary sounds by playing recordings of thunder or fireworks in the background while the dog plays or eats or receives a relaxing massage. Start the soundtrack very quietly at first, gradually turning up the volume as the dog tolerates the sounds without showing any anxiety. If this type of desensitization program is rushed, however, it can worsen fears by overwhelming the dog. In extreme cases of sound sensitivity, veterinarians will sometimes prescribe calming medication to be administered during stressful times or in conjunction with a gradual desensitization program.

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