

10 Things you can do to keep your dog calm during thunder storms and fireworks

There is no 'magic bullet' that fixes the problem in all or even a majority of dogs.

Often a combination approach is required to achieve a detectable reduction in distress.

It is normal for a dog to look anxious during a storm and if they seek a hiding place you should *leave them*, this is a coping mechanism and they will come to no harm.

Combinations of the following may help.

1. DON'T fuss over, make sympathetic noises or talk to your dog in a high pitch voice. For a dog this makes them feel that you are worried too and reinforces their anxiety.
2. Allow outside dogs indoors, and if they seek a hiding place you should *leave them*, this is a coping mechanism.
3. Using Dog Appeasing Pheromone. This comes in various forms.
4. Make your dog a cubby (not a typical kennel as it is usually too big) as a 'safe place', somewhere quiet.
5. Give your dog the company of a person who is relaxed during thunder & is sufficiently authoritative to get the dog to drop or go to its cubby, and who will ignore the dogs anxiety and not be distressed by it.
6. Stroking (long slow full body strokes) alternated with deep muscle massage, or wearing a "Thundercoat"
7. Intensive environmental enrichment will help to keep your dog as relaxed about life as possible. Such as playing Tug of war with their favorite toy or toys such as Kong's which can be filled with treats to keep your dog occupied during an anxious time. (ask us what would suit your dog best)
8. If a combination of the above isn't working, you may find using a short term anxiety treatment the answer. Using an antianxiety medication can calm you pet down during the event and help prevent them getting worse. It is best to start these early rather than wait until your dog is doing serious damage to your home or itself - Please contact us.
9. Seasonal use of medication during the thunderstorm season also to reduce anxiety - Please contact us.
10. If progress is unsatisfactory referral to a veterinary behaviour specialist can be arranged – the website of one Melbourne based specialist provider is www.animalbehaviour.com (others are available).

