



# Keep Your Pets Stress-Free During Fireworks Season

Any loud noise can cause a pet's anxiety to skyrocket, especially fireworks. It doesn't help that on July 4<sup>th</sup>, the festivities and fireworks can go on for hours and hours; usually the fireworks on New Year's Eve are of a shorter duration. Read the tips below on how to make your pet as comfortable as possible during this stressful time.

## TIRE THEM OUT

A physically and mentally tired pet will be less likely to expend nervous energy. Start early in the day by taking your dog on a run, walk, or hike and spend the rest of the day playing with your dog (or cat). Hopefully, they'll be able to sleep or relax through the main event at the end of the night—fireworks displays.

## WRAP THEM UP

Pets are often treated like our babies and benefit from some of the same calming techniques, such as being swaddled and hugged. Applying pressure with a blanket or anxiety vest causes a calming effect by releasing feel-good endorphins in the brain. However, it's important to get your pet accustomed to a pressure wrap. Put it on for a short amount of time each day about a week before the fireworks festivities, making sure it's not too tight that it restricts movement, breathing, or blood flow. Anxiety vests, such as ThunderShirt, can be used on cats or dogs.

## NOISE-TRAIN THEM

The best way to keep your pet calm during loud noises is exposure and training. This long-term solution works by intentionally making loud noises, whether physically or electronically, and rewarding your pet for good behavior. Start by making noises at a low volume while keeping eye contact with your pet. If they remain calm, reward them with treats. Work up to louder and louder noises until they can take a night of fireworks without becoming stressed. This technique could take weeks to months, so start early — and remember there are two holidays that celebrate with fireworks!

## KNOW YOUR PET'S SCHEDULE

If your pet is just naturally anxious, make sure to work around the fireworks schedule. Take your dog out before nightfall for their potty walk. Feed your dog or cat earlier in the day so they won't be too anxious to eat at night and miss a meal. Invite them to cuddle with you once the fireworks start and during their bedtime so they feel safe and protected.

## DISTRACTION AND COMFORTING

While fireworks can be very loud, you can be louder — in a comforting way of course. Put the TV on, plug in a white-noise machine, or play some calming music just loud enough to drown out the booms. You can provide more distraction by playing with your pet or giving them a bone or Kong. If they prefer to lounge in the evening, help them feel safe by closing the curtains or putting a blanket over their crate so they can't see out.

## CONSULT A PROFESSIONAL

If your pet can't shake the symptoms of noise anxiety, involve a veterinarian or board-certified veterinary behaviorist. They can provide anxiety medication or a longer-term, multi-step approach to helping your pet improve their anxiety and responses to that anxiety. Veterinary professionals are better than any online resource when it comes to the comfort and safety of your pet, no matter the timeline or method of calming that works best for you and your pet. **TVN**

### Signs and Symptoms

- Hiding
- Chewing
- Panting
- Pacing
- Digging
- Drooling
- Urinating or Defecating
- Barking/Talking
- Tucked Tail
- Flat Ears
- Wide Eyes
- Shaking
- Restlessness
- Attempted escape