



Our Clinics

SOUND PHOBIA



Desensitizing your pet to the sound they have a phobia to is essential for their long term welfare. A CD recording of thunder and fireworks noises is available for a small fee. This is initially played at a low level, which your pet can hear but doesn't react to and gradually the volume is increased over time. It comes with instructions and is best initiated during times of the year when exposure to your pet's fear/phobia is unlikely, so that your pet can improve prior to the next fireworks or thunderstorm season. However, many dogs with storm phobias have multiple triggers, which can make it difficult for the phobia to resolve entirely e.g. wind/barometric pressure changes/rain etc., Therefore a consultation with your veterinarian will usually be required.

- Nina Smith (BVSc, BSc)



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Tauranga Vets

424 Cameron Road, Tauranga (next to Pak n Save)
P: 07 578 4044 E: taurangavets@bopvets.co.nz

Clinic Hours:

8:00am – 6:00pm Monday – Friday
9:00am – 2:00pm Saturday
10:00am – 2:00pm Sunday

Katikati Vets

2 Sheffield Street Katikati
P: 07 549 0215 E: katikativets@bopvets.co.nz

Clinic Hours:

8:00am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday
9:00am – 12:00pm Saturday

Papamoa Vets

30 Gravatt Rd, Papamoa (At Fashion Island)
P: 07 572 2334 E: papamoavillagevets@bopvets.co.nz

Clinic Hours:

8.00am – 5.30pm, Monday – Friday
9.00am – 12.00pm, Saturday

Te Puna Vets

15C Minden Road Te Puna
(Next to Farmlands)
P: 07 552 4015 E: tepunavets@bopvets.co.nz

Clinic Hours:

8:00am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday
9:00am – 12:00pm Saturday

Emergency After Hours service

P: 0800 838 7267



www.facebook.com/taurangavets

For more information visit www.bopvets.co.nz

Some practical tips

Although there are a number of different sounds that cause fear and anxiety in our pets, the most common is due to fireworks and thunder. Of our pets, dogs are the most frequently affected, with up to 60% of dogs suffering from sound phobias. Although it often starts with mild fear or anxiety, with time the fear and associated behaviours can progress to extremely debilitating phobias. In addition, it's common for the types of sounds found to be frightening to generalise. It is not uncommon for a pet to initially be fearful of fireworks, but over time this pet also becomes frightened of thunder and later of wind or even rain.





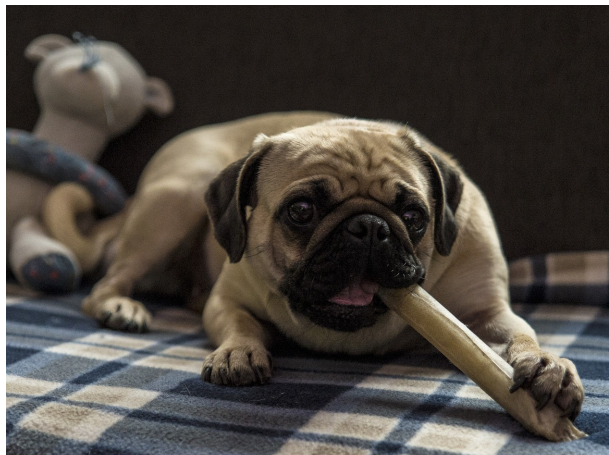
SOUND PHOBIA

There are a number of things you can do to help your pet. Accessing weather reports can allow planning for days which have a high risk of thunderstorms. Ask your neighbours if they will be celebrating with fireworks around Guy Fawkes or New Years. On known fireworks evenings, walk your dog early and settle them into a room with minimal windows and blackout curtains, ideally in a central part of your home for greater sound proofing. The garage is a room to avoid, as the insulation and sound proofing in garages tends to be minimal. It may be possible to organize for your pet to be boarded in the country with friends, away from fireworks displays. Some boarding kennels may even have specialized facilities for noise sensitive dogs. Another option may be to sound proof an area of your home.

Create a 'safe haven' for your dog, such as a covered crate or den, to minimize stimuli and improve their sense of security. This should be a place that your dog likes to go to on a normal day, where there is food, toys and treats and the door is left open. Dogs that are fearful often like to bury themselves, so provide blankets or bedding that they can use to do this. Talk calmly to your dog, providing reassurance



without overly fussing or reinforcing their fear. Use long smooth strokes, allowing body contact or any other strategy that helps your dog feel more settled. Have special toys to aid in distraction, and only provide these during stressful times, (such as kong toys filled with treats).



Adaptil is a pheromone (a hormone that your dog can smell, but doesn't affect people) that has been shown to help reduce anxiety with noise phobias. This comes as a spray, collar or plug-in for a particular room or area of the house.

Background "white noise" can be played, Thundershirts, ear covers (e.g. [Mutt Muffs®](#)) and sound-muting cage covers (e.g. [Thunderhut®](#)) can also assist in reducing the intensity of the feared stimulus, while eye covers (e.g. [Doggles®](#)) and black-out curtains may reduce the visual stimuli associated with storms and fireworks



Treatment options:

True phobias are common and are very debilitating for your pet. These dogs require anti-anxiety medication, both for their well-being and to enable them to learn and improve while on a behavioural programme implemented by your vet.

Xanax is a short acting anti-anxiety medication, ideally given an hour before fireworks or storms. It has an amnesic effect, meaning your pet won't remember the fireworks/storm. Normally phobia's get worse with time, as each time they are scared will build upon the previous time. Xanax should stop this progression, while also helping to calm your pet.

Some dogs with storm phobias require longer term anti-anxiety medications (e.g. clomicalm) to help reduce low level chronic anxiety. These dogs are able to detect minor changes such as barometric pressure changes or increased wind & rain that they associate with storms and thunder. If a dog is chronically anxious, he/she will be unable to learn and therefore unable to respond to behavioural desensitisation programmes and get better. These medications will enable your dog to learn and in addition will help when you are unable to predict a storm or fireworks, or when there are likely to be long periods of these sounds occurring.

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