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# Norfolk K9 Training

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**Do fireworks  
scare your  
dog?**

**Some tips for the  
festive season**



Do fireworks scare your dog? He's not alone. While they're fun for humans, the loud, unexpected sounds of fireworks cause stress and anxiety for a lot of dogs. Before July 4th rolls around, here are eleven things to know about why your dog gets anxious and what you can do to help.

**1. It's normal if your dog gets scared.** While we humans have learned to expect fireworks around the Christmas & New Year Celebrations, the sound of fireworks can be quite startling for dogs.

**2. After all, your dog has keen senses that make fireworks a more intense experience.** Your dog's acute hearing makes him more sensitive to the sounds of fireworks than you are. Fireworks also produce an odour that dogs may be sensitive to.

**3. During fireworks, your dog experiences the same kind of startled response you do when you're surprised by a loud noise.** This may mean an increase in heart rate, a rush of adrenaline, and an increase in stress hormones circulating through the body.

**4. For your dog, fireworks aren't the same experience as a thunderstorm.** Thunderstorms come with a lot of warning signs, like changes in barometric pressure and high winds, so dogs anticipate them. Since fireworks are sudden and occur less frequently than thunderstorms, dogs might be more intimidated by them.

**5. There are plenty of dogs who aren't afraid of fireworks.** It might be because they're naturally easy-going, or it might be because they were exposed to enough noises when they were young that they understand that fireworks aren't a threat.

**6. If you start early, you can help lower your dog's sensitivity to the sound of fireworks.** If you know there are going to be fireworks in your area, you can help prepare your dog by exposing him to recorded firework sounds. Note that this process takes months of effort that includes gradually increasing the volume while you reward your dog for keeping calm. It's not a short-term fix.

**7. If you start really early, you might be able to desensitize your dog to a lot of loud noises.** If you expose your dog to noises like fireworks, thunder, car horns and train whistles in a positive manner when he's between 3 weeks and 3-months-old, he's more likely to be unfazed by noises later in life.

**8. No time? Create a special area in your home where your dog can feel safe and secure during the noise.** If your dog is crate trained then he may feel most secure in his crate with a nice chew toy to occupy his time. If she's not crate-trained, putting her bed in a calm place during the fireworks might work. Try closing the windows and playing some music.

**9. Help your dog feel happy during fireworks.** Why not give your dog a special treat or his favorite toy? It might help to create positive associations with fireworks.

**10. Calming wraps and thundershirts may help for some dogs, too.** These work like swaddling does for infants – they make your dog feel secure during stressful situations.

**11. The most important thing you can do is stay calm.** Making a big fuss around the dog only reassures him that there is a good reason to panic, Dogs look at us for reassurance so showing them that we are calm and relaxed is likely to help the dog understand that there is no real danger.



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