

Treatment

Creating A Safe Zone

The best plan of action for your dog who suffers from noise aversion is to avoid exposure to the noise trigger whenever possible. However, in many cases that is impractical so the next best thing is to minimize the intensity of the noise. Here are some simple things that you can do to modifying your home to help reduce your dog's exposure to the noise

- Draw the blinds or use blackening shades to help prevent flashes of light, which are predictive of the noise associated with thunder or fireworks.
- Add white noise or use a fan to help muffle the noise.
- Alternatively, turn on music. Soft style music, such as classical is preferred. Play the music loud enough that it can drown out the noise but not so loud that you frighten the dog even more.
- Turn the lights on.
- Choose an area where your dog tends to go on their own when the noise start (e.g., in a bathroom, closet, or hallway; under a table or in their crate). This will be your dog's safe zone. Discuss this with your veterinarian to help pick the right place.
 - Train your dog to go to his/her safe zone. Your veterinarian will have tips or instructions on how to do this.
 - Help strengthen your dog's association with the safe zone by doing things in that area that your dog enjoys, when the noise is not occurring, like playing, training, or even feeding meals occasionally.
 - Add soft bedding to the safe zone.
 - If your dogs' safe zone is a crate, you can cover the crate with a blanket, so it's feels like a den.
 - Just before or at the time that the noise begins, encourage your dog to go to their safe zone and give them favorite toys, treats or a food-stuffed toy for them to occupy themselves.
- Remain calm and act normally during the noise, since your dog can sense if you are anxious, which will only add to their level of fear, and anxiety and stress.

“ We want to teach the dog to go to their safe zone to relax when the frightening event is not happening too so he has an emotional attachment to the area – good things happen here; scary things do not.” –Dr. Bennett

