



Just for cats

- Make sure your cat has somewhere to hide if they want to. For example, this may be under some furniture or in a quiet corner.
- When they're in their hiding place, don't try to tempt your cat out, as this will make them more stressed.
- Talk to your vet about using a calming pheromone diffuser.

Don't forget small animals

- If your pets live outside, partly cover cages, pens and aviaries with blankets so that one area is well sound-proofed. Make sure your pets are still able to look out.
- Provide lots of extra bedding, so your pets have something to burrow in.
- Consider bringing them indoors. This should be done gradually, so you'll need to plan ahead.



Reducing the impact

If you want to enjoy fireworks, you can make them less frightening for animals in the following ways.

- Go to an organised event – this will reduce the overall number of fireworks disturbing animals.
- Only let off fireworks on, or around, traditional celebration dates, such as Diwali, Bonfire Night, New Year's Eve and Chinese New Year. Most owners will know to expect fireworks on these dates and will be ready to help their animals cope.
- Look for low-noise fireworks and let your neighbours know well in advance so they can prepare their animals, including horses, sheep, cows, etc.
- Never set off fireworks near grazing animals, as these animals – especially horses – can injure themselves when frightened.
- Remember, fireworks can also disturb wildlife, so steer clear of known habitats, such as lakes with waterfowl and trees with roosting birds.
- Check bonfires for wildlife before lighting them, as animals such as hedgehogs may be hibernating.
- Pick up any firework litter after it's cooled down and dispose of it safely, as it can harm animals.



You can find more information on how to be a firework-friendly neighbour in our Kind Sparks guide at: rspca.org.uk/kindspark

RSPCA.

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham RH12 1GY ■ 0300 1230 100 ■ rspca.org.uk
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Fireworks frighten animals

Help them feel safe.



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Fireworks are enjoyed year-round by lots of people, but many animals are frightened by them.

If your pet is scared, there are lots of things you can do to help. Follow our top tips to make fireworks celebrations less frightening for your pet. And talk to your vet who can, if necessary, refer you to a professional clinical animal behaviourist.

Keeping cats and dogs secure

- Make sure your dog or cat always has somewhere to hide if they want to. For example, you could create a cosy den by covering a crate or a piece of furniture with blankets in a quiet, safe corner of a room.
- Make sure your cat or dog is always kept in a safe and secure environment and can't escape if there's a sudden noise.
- Never punish your pets when they're frightened, as this will only make things worse in the long run.
- During fireworks seasons, walk dogs during daylight hours and keep cats and dogs indoors when fireworks are likely to be set off.
- At nightfall, close windows and curtains and put on calming music to mask and muffle the sound of fireworks.
- Have your pets microchipped in case they do escape. By law, dogs in the UK over eight weeks old and cats in England over 20 weeks old should be microchipped.



Make sure your dog or cat always has somewhere to hide if they want to and has access to this place at all times.

Just for dogs

Ahead of the fireworks season

Planning ahead can help dogs cope with the fireworks season.

Talk to your vet about using calming pheromone diffusers. In some cases, your vet may even prescribe medication. Use either of these options alongside behavioural therapy. Ask your vet to refer you to a clinical animal behaviourist or play sound recordings of fireworks (see Sound therapy opposite).

Before the fireworks season starts, give your dog a safe place they can go to. This should be in a quiet area, so choose one of the quietest rooms in your home. It should be somewhere they feel in control, so try not to disturb your dog when they're there. It's important your dog has access to their safe place at all times – even when you're not at home.



Train your dog to associate their safe place with positive experiences – for example, by leaving their favourite toys there. You could also give them a variety of chew toys to enjoy there, such as stuffed Kongs. It's a good idea to swap the toys regularly, putting them away when they're not in use, so your dog doesn't get bored with them.

With time, dogs can learn that this place is safe and enjoyable, so that when fireworks go off they may choose to go there. This can help them to cope better with fireworks. When they're in their safe space, don't try to tempt your dog out, as this will make them more stressed.



At nightfall, close windows and curtains and put on music to mask and muffle the sound of fireworks.

When the fireworks start

Close any windows and black out your dog's safe area so they don't get scared by the flashing lights.

Each evening, before the fireworks begin, move your dog to their safe area and give them toys and other things they enjoy. Make sure there are things for you to do too, so your dog isn't left alone.

Ignore the firework noises and play with a toy to see if your dog wants to join in, but don't force them to play.

Sound therapy

In the long term, your dog needs to learn to be less afraid of loud noises. With proper treatment this is possible, so that the next fireworks season is less stressful for you and your dog.

We recommend playing your dog high-quality sound recordings of fireworks so they get used to the noises. These can be found online. The amount of training needed will vary from dog to dog, so start training well in advance of fireworks seasons.

