



# HELP YOUR PET CELEBRATE A ★ FEAR FREE NEW YEAR ★

## FEAR FREE TIPS FOR NEW YEAR'S CHEER WITH YOUR PET

New Year's festivities can be a time of stress for many dogs and cats. From a pet's perspective, loud, unpredictable noises and celebratory fireworks explosions are threatening and an understandable cause for alarm. For pets whose people are hosting a party, the presence of strangers and the changes in their environment—decorations, scented candles or potpourri, furniture moved around—can also be distressing. Thankfully, it doesn't have to be this way. Here are tips to help your dog or cat keep calm and carry on as they join you in welcoming in the new year.



### YOUR PET'S VETERINARY TEAM IS HERE TO HELP

If your dog or cat is upset by fireworks or other loud noises or on edge around unfamiliar people, talk to your veterinarian about options to help your pet.

- ✓ They may suggest medications or supplements to help your pet relax. For instance, dexmedetomidine oromucosal gel, designed to be absorbed through the gums, can help pets who are fearful of loud or unexpected noises.
- ✓ They might recommend working with a veterinary behaviorist or rewards-based trainer who can help you recognize and anticipate a pet's fears and modify them using techniques like counterconditioning and desensitization.



### SET UP A SOOTHING SANCTUARY

With a little know-how, you can drown out extraneous noise, block flashing lights, and naturally calm your dog and cat.

- ✓ Play calming music: classical, reggae, and soft rock typically have the best results.
- ✓ Fill any gaps in the music with a fountain, fan, or white noise machine.
- ✓ Use pheromone sprays or plug-ins to bring a sense of calm to your home. Pet pheromone products—with versions made for dogs and for cats—mimic the soothing natural chemicals produced by mother cats and dogs to comfort their offspring.
- ✓ For dogs with severe noise anxiety, look for wearable noise-reduction products that work to muffle sounds or temporarily place cotton balls in their ears during the noisy event.
- ✓ Certain nutraceuticals—foods with health benefits—can have a calming effect on anxious animals.



### A SNUG HUG CAN HELP REDUCE ANXIETY

The gentle-pressure hug of a compression garment induces feelings of wellbeing for some dogs (and on occasion, some cats).

- ✓ Some compression garments include gentle vibrations or music to further calm your dog.
- ✓ Compression garments can have a soothing effect for a small percentage of cats (just ensure the cat is actually relaxed and not frozen from fear). Try a looser fit at first with cats before moving to a snugger fit.

## HOME HELP



### FIREWORKS AND PETS DON'T MIX

- Don't take your pet with you to fireworks celebrations.
- Ensure that cats with outside access remain safely indoors, especially during fireworks displays. Try to take your dog on potty breaks early in the evening, before fireworks are likely to go off.
- Minimize flashes and flickering of fireworks—which can escalate pet anxiety—by blocking windows or accompanying the pet to a room with limited views of the outdoors.
- Turn on lights in the home to decrease the contrast of light changes.
- Provide options for cats to retreat to high hideaways or for dogs to take refuge in noise-buffered safe spaces, such as closets or bedrooms without windows.



### COMFORT FROM OTHERS

- For some dogs and cats, the calming presence of their beloved humans or canine buddies is a confidence booster in stressful situations on its own.
- For animals upset by new faces and change during holiday parties, it's important to consider if the animal would fare better in a protected space away from the stress of a celebration. Continue to monitor the pet's stress and allow freedom of choice for the pet during interactions, respecting the animal's choice to move away if desired.



### DON'T ATTEMPT TO PULL YOUR DOG OR CAT OUT FROM HIDING

- A fearful, upset dog or cat may lash out and bite if cornered and confronted.
- Gently encourage the dog or cat to come out on their own with a treat or a toy, or simply let the animal hide in their getaway space if safe to do so.
- For noisy events, keeping the room open is helpful, especially for dogs, as the feeling of being trapped can escalate panic.

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