

# How to help manage a fear of storms

Every dog is different, and has had different experiences

**1 Desensitise them to the noises.** Download apps that make the noises they don't like, start with rain and build up to the scarier ones. You can play these noises during playtime or while you feed them, so when a storm hits, they're used to those noises. You can download tracks that play storm sounds and have them playing quietly while life goes on, and increase the volume over time.

**2 Distraction techniques.** Getting them involved in play time, puzzles, belly rubs, or snacks is a great way for them to stop caring about the storm and get their focus on something else.

**3 Block the windows.** For some dogs it's the flash of lightening they really react to, or things moving really fast in the wind. If you can cover your windows with towels or blankets, you can reduce their reactions. You can also start desensitising with flashing lights when there aren't storms-exposure can decrease reactions.

**4 Swaddling them.** Options such as ThunderShirts work on the premise that applying pressure is like giving them a hug, so they feel safe. These are getting are great results with some dogs.

**5 Exercise them before a storm.** Make sure they're getting appropriate exercise. If they haven't been out for a while, they'll already have pent up energy they want to get out. A well exercised dog is more relaxed than one who doesn't get to expend their energy.

**6 Bodywork therapies.** If your animal reacts to loads of loud noises, they could be reacting to the way it hurts when they tense their body when they are scared or nervous. By getting rid of sore spots in their neck and back, I have helped dogs get over what looked like their 'fear of loud noises'.

**7 Block out the noise.** Do you have a soundproof room? Me neither. But dogs like dens, and you can cover their crate or beds with blankets. Being closed off and the ability to hide seems to really settle some dogs.

**8 Change their environment.** Being shut in the bathroom with the fan on creates some white noise and helps to shut out the storm. You can also use the laundry and the washing machine or dryer. If they can't hear it, BAM the storm is gone as far as they're concerned. Use something that your dog is NOT scared of.

**9 Helpful smells.** Pheromones, aromatherapy, flower essences...is there something that already relaxes them? Give them a worn shirt of yours, a used towel, or swap one of their smelly blankets with a friend who also has a dog, then swap back once they've sniffed all the interesting things off it. Different things work for different dogs!

**10 Medication** can be an effective option, and can help to dampen their stress and reactions. This is something you MUST discuss with your vet.



**Always discuss medication with your vet first. Just because it worked for someone else's dog doesn't mean it's safe for your dog to use their leftover meds!**