

## Fear of Noise in Cats and Dogs

Fear is a term that is often used colloquially for a variety of situations. Technically speaking, fear describes a negative emotional stress reaction of the body to a trigger.

Our animals can hear up to 4x better than people over long distances, have a larger range of frequencies, and are also able to better locate sounds. Not least for these reasons, New Years represents a stressful occasion for many animals.

### Body language in stress / anxiety

- Licking nose / muzzle
- Wagging tail, yawning, sniffing
- Ears, lips, scalp pulled backwards
- Tail down
- „Making themself small“ - crouching posture / gait
- Looking away - looking to the side
- Turning the back / side of the body away or even the entire body
- Keeping distance
- slow movements, „freezing“
- Laying down (one of the strongest signals)

### Physical Signals

- Increased heart / respiratory rate
- Hair loss / flaking skin
- Sweating
- Diarrhoea, decreased feed intake to the point of vomiting
- Increased reactivity
- Body / mouth odour, muscular tension

In behavioural therapy, there are many building blocks that can help your dog to get an anxiety problem under control.

The following management strategies should be used for New Years:

- Go for walks at times and places where there is a low chance of fireworks
- Kept on a lead
- Avoid contact with other anxious animals!
- Close all windows, shutters and curtains
- Make preferred retreats available
- Switch on a noise (e.g. radio, television)
- Ignore fright and anxiety reactions as far as possible – but for safety, don't leave your dog alone
- Do not take your dog outside during the fireworks
- Before the fireworks begin, offer a long lasting chew toy such as a Kong. But beware: If your animal can't intake more food at that time, this indicates serious stress!!

If you have already tried all of these management strategies and your dog's behaviour has not improved, you can, despite everything, find a solution in specifically structured behavioural therapy. In addition to the measures already mentioned above there are possibilities of systematic desensitisation and conditioning, developing a relaxation signal and a hideaway (e.g. box training) up to the use of medication, feed additives and even earplug training.

Contact us, in order to create an individual training plan for you and your dog can so that, for example, New Years goes smoothly and you can start in a Happy New Year.

