

## 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.
- Don't try and tempt your cat out as this will cause them to become more stressed.

## 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 that 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 will 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.
- Please only let fireworks off on or around traditional celebration dates (Diwali, Bonfire Night, New Year's Eve and Chinese New Year). Most owners will already know to expect fireworks on these dates, and should have prepared accordingly to help their animals cope. Look for low noise fireworks, and let your neighbours know well in advance so animals, including horses and livestock, can be prepared.
- Never set off fireworks near livestock, as frightened animals – especially horses – can injure themselves when frightened.
- Remember, fireworks can also disturb wildlife so steer clear of known habitats like lakes with waterfowl and trees with roosting birds.
- Check bonfires for wildlife before lighting as animals like hedgehogs may be hibernating.
- Pick up any firework litter after it has cooled down and dispose of it safely, as it can harm animals.

Photos: Andrew Linscott; Alison Stollwood; David Chapman/RSPCA Photolibrary



**Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

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## JUST FOR DOGS AHEAD OF THE FIREWORKS SEASON

Planning ahead can help dogs cope with the fireworks season.

- Talk to your vet about pheromone diffusers. These disperse calming chemicals into the room and may be a good option for your dog – in some cases your vet may even prescribe medication. Either of these options must be used in conjunction with behavioural therapy. We would recommend asking your vet to refer you to a clinical animal behaviourist or using the Sounds Scary therapy pack (see over).
- Before the fireworks season starts, provide your dog with a doggy safe haven. This should be a quiet area so choose one of the quietest rooms in your home – it should be a place where they feel in control, so don't interfere with your dog when they're in that area. Train your dog to associate the area with positive experiences e.g. by leaving their favourite toys there but not imposing yourself at any time. Also, use a variety of chew toys, e.g. stuffed Kongs and chews and swap them regularly, putting them away when not in use so that your dog doesn't become bored with them.

With time dogs can learn that this place is safe and enjoyable. So when fireworks go off they may choose to go there because they know, in that place, no harm will come to them and so they are more able to cope. It is important that your dog has access to this doggy safe haven at all times – even when you're not at home.

### WHEN THE FIREWORKS START

- Close any windows and black out the 'doggy play area' to remove any extra problems caused by flashing lights.
- Each evening before the fireworks begin, move your dog to the play area and provide toys and other things that they enjoy. Make sure that there are things for you to do too so that your dog isn't left alone.
- Ignore the firework noises yourself. Play with a toy to see if your dog wants to join in, but don't force them to play.

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

It doesn't have to be that way though, so 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 will, if necessary, be able to 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 and has access to this place at all times. For example, this may be under some furniture or in a cupboard.
- 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. Have your pets microchipped in case they do escape – by law, your dog should already be microchipped.
- 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 music to mask and muffle the sound of fireworks.
- Never punish your pets when they are scared as this will only make things worse in the long run.

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### SOUNDS SCARY

**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 will be less stressful for you and your dog.**

We recommend Sounds Scary, an easy-to-follow therapy pack for dogs which includes a specially made set of high-quality sound recordings and an easy-to-follow guide. The amount of training needed will vary from dog to dog, so owners should start training with the Sounds Scary pack well in advance of firework seasons.

**Visit: [www.rspca.org.uk/fireworks](http://www.rspca.org.uk/fireworks) for more information and to download the therapy pack.**

