



Firework Night Plan

The safe den, the calm evening routine, and the do's and don'ts that genuinely matter

PETSLIKEMINE
BEHAVIOUR & ANXIETY

PET NAME _____	VET PRACTICE _____	OUT-OF-HOURS _____
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Noise fear is the most common behaviour problem in dogs, and a frightening night for many cats too. You have not left it too late, and there is a great deal you can do tonight to make the next display easier. The plan is simple: a den, a calm routine, comfort offered freely, and the right medication arranged with your vet in advance.

SET UP THE SAFE DEN, IN ADVANCE

- A dark, muffling, voluntary hideaway: a covered corner or open crate for a dog, bolt-holes for a cat
- Set it up days early with familiar bedding so it already feels safe before the first bang
- Leave it always open: never shut a panicking dog inside a closed crate, it can injure itself
- Black out the den, and let your pet come and go entirely by choice

THE DAY-OF ROUTINE

- Walk the dog and feed everyone before dark, before any fireworks start
- Close windows, curtains and blinds to muffle the booms and block the flashes
- Shut and lock cat flaps and external doors: frightened pets do bolt and run
- Check today that the microchip details are up to date with your address and phone
- Mask the sound with low, rumbling, broadband noise (a fan, the TV), not gentle high piano
- For a cat, put an indoor litter tray out in a quiet spot, plus plenty of hiding places

COMFORT IS NOT THE ENEMY

You cannot reinforce fear by comforting a frightened pet. Fear is an emotion, not a trick you can reward into being stronger. If your pet comes to you, welcome them: stroke them, talk calmly, let them lean on you. Be the steady person in the room. If they would rather hide, let them. Offer high-value food or a lick mat as the bangs happen, but never force it.

THE MEDICATION TRAP, AND WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

An old sedative such as ACP flattens the body without touching the fear, leaving a pet still but still terrified. The medicines that genuinely help work on the anxiety, are prescribed by your vet, and are best trial-dosed on a calm evening before the season: some are given at the first sign of worry, some must be started a couple of days ahead. Book that chat with your vet early; never source it yourself or dig out last year's tablets.

THE DON'TS

- Do not take a dog out to "get used to" the fireworks, or walk near displays
- Do not leave a frightened pet alone if you can help it
- Never punish a scared pet, not for hiding, pacing, or a fear-driven accident

PER-NIGHT FEAR LOG · the raw material for a quieter-season plan

DATE / EVENT	HOW SOON DISTRESSED	COULD THEY EAT?	WHAT HELPED	NOTES
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Written and reviewed by Dr Alastair Greenway MRCVS and Claire Greenway BVM&S MRCVS. This sheet explains and records. It does not diagnose or prescribe. Always follow your own vet's instructions.

How to use. Build the den early, keep the evening calm, comfort freely, and arrange the right medication with your vet in advance. This sheet is a wellbeing aid, not a substitute for veterinary advice.

**COMFORT CANNOT MAKE FEAR WORSE;
PLAN THE MEDICATION EARLY**