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**ADDRESSING  
THE FEAR:  
NOISE AVERSION  
AND YOUR PET**

**D**oes your dog or cat cover in the corner or hide in the bathtub on New Year's Eve and the Fourth of July? How about during thunderstorms? Although most animals don't love loud noises, for a large subset of pets—nearly half, by some estimates—the sensitivity to sudden, loud noises is more than a dislike. It reaches fear- and anxiety-inducing levels that can lead to behavioral and health challenges. This extreme reaction is called noise aversion.

The sounds associated with noise aversion share the common characteristics of being extremely loud, difficult to localize, and lacking in pattern—think fireworks, thunder, construction, and honking horns. Researchers do not know why some animals experience significant anxiety when they hear loud noises. Some pets may already suffer from anxiety disorders that are heightened by high-pitched noises, while others may develop the fear following a traumatic experience or learn the trait from another pet in the home. Regardless, it's important for pet owners to recognize that their furry friend may be suffering and that

noise aversion is a real medical condition that can be treated.

As with any illness or behavioral change you notice in your pet, noise aversion requires veterinary attention. Your veterinarian is the best source of knowledge and will be an invaluable resource for helping your pet find effective relief from this very real and potentially dangerous phobia.

**THE DOS AND DON'TS OF TREATING NOISE AVERSION**

You can institute a variety of remedies—both medical and environmental—to relieve your pet of the fretfulness that results from noise aversion. In many cases, it's a combination of treatments that garners the best results.

First, it's important to pinpoint the triggers of your pet's fear, as not all animals respond to loud sounds in the same way. For instance, if you know fireworks cause extreme anxiety for your pet, you'll want to have measures in place before holidays such as New Year's Eve and

Independence Day to help him get through the celebrations unscathed. Similarly, if storms cause your cat to hide in a closet or defecate outside the litterbox, but slamming doors barely makes her flinch, you can deduce that thunder is likely the trigger.

**Don't Scold**

When your pet does something wrong, such as chewing your favorite slipper or scratching at the couch, your initial reaction may be to

*(continues on back)*

