



Christine E. Hunt, DVM

Dr. Christine E. Hunt received her B.S. in Zoology from N.C. State University, cum laude, followed by her veterinary doctorate from Oklahoma State University. She has practiced small animal medicine, dentistry and surgery in Greensboro since 1983. In 2003, she opened University Animal Hospital. Her interests lie in advanced and novel pain management techniques, internal medicine, dermatology and comprehensive dentistry.

swaddling Thunder shirt or tight, heavy tee shirt that can duplicate hugging. Once your pet is consistently relaxed in its Zen Pen, follow through with all of the learned relaxation techniques during storm events. If you have a puppy, start him/her off on the right paw by making storm time synonymous with play and treat time.

MY DOG IS SO AFRAID OF THUNDERSTORMS THAT SHE WILL BREAK THROUGH A WINDOW AND RUN AWAY. WHAT CAN I DO?

This behavior is extremely dangerous and your pet needs medical intervention with anti-anxiety medications such as benzo diazepam derivatives or Gabapentin. Many patients are responding to a new anti-anxiety medication called Sileo that is applied to the gum line and is quickly absorbed directly into the bloodstream. It is designed specifically for the treatment of noise phobias, but is contraindicated in dogs with heart, lung, liver or kidney disease. The dosing syringe can be a little tricky to use and can cause a drug overdose if it is not used correctly. Careful use and application of Sileo can help your pet ride out the storm fear free.

Anxiety in Pets

The Fourth of July has come and gone, but summer thunderstorms followed by the onset of hurricane season can still strike fear in the hearts of your pets. Early intervention of fearful behaviors is the key to helping your pet have a well-adjusted, happy life.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE EARLY SIGNS OF ANXIETY IN PETS?



Some pets display very subtle signs like dilated pupils, changes in facial expressions, increased panting, pacing, shivering, or clingy behaviors. Excessive anxiety frequently manifests itself by more dangerous destructive behaviors, escape behaviors, or fear based aggression.

WHY DOES MY DOG HIDE IN THE SHOWER WHENEVER THERE'S A THUNDERSTORM?

This is an example of escape or hiding behavior. Hiding in the bathroom, closet or under the bed helps dampen the sound, barometric pressure changes and visual effects of the thunder and lightning by recreating a cave-like environment. Take this instinctive behavior and redirect it with positive reinforcement during good weather. Use calming beneficial pheromones and lavender to scent your pet's bed. Give all treats there, and reinforce this safe zone with a lot of petting and social interaction. Start calming supplements such as Composure-pro or Silloquin well before the storms are predicted to start. Make this your pet's Zen Pen. Find calming music that blocks out the sound of heavy rain and thunder. Use a

CAN MY DOG STAY ON MEDICATION ALL THE TIME? HE IS AFRAID OF EVERY LOUD NOISE, EVEN THE TV.

Some dogs do need medication all of the time, but it works better in combination with a pheromone collar, a Thunder shirt and basic training. Diets containing calming supplements can also reduce the need for constant anti-anxiety medication. Obedience training helps dogs learn self-confidence because they then know what is expected of them. The training can be used to help them desensitize to fearful triggers. Positive reinforcement with treats or toys should always be part of your pet's therapy. In some cases of extreme global or pan phobias, a board certified veterinary behavior consultant may be required to help these extremely fearful pets.



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