

10. Mekuti solutions for coping with anxiety

Benefits

- ✓ Drug Free
- ✓ Simple to use
- ✓ Effects can be immediate
- ✓ No Velcro
- ✓ Durable - great value for money!

Useful for:

- ✓ Fear of thunder / fireworks
- ✓ Separation anxiety
- ✓ Travel issues
- ✓ General or social anxiety
- ✓ Over excitement

How do they work?

A gentle maintained contact around the body acts like a portable hug and creates a calming effect.

However, just hugging your dog is counter productive as it inhibits your dog's natural urge to either hide or run away when it is anxious, which can in turn increase the dog's discomfort.

The Body Wrap, T-Shirt or Jumper provide the contact and ability to move around, (although the majority of dogs just settle down and go to sleep when wearing the calming equipment).

Research shows that specific physical contact changes the body chemistry from that of stress to one of calm.

How do I decide what to use?

I'll be with my dog

Body Wrap, T-Shirt or Jumper

My dog may be left unattended

T-Shirt or Jumper

Most anxiety is experienced during the cooler months e.g. firework season and New Year

Jumper

Outside, over-reacting or barking at other dogs and people, or Inside, when there are visitors

Mekuti Calming Band

Coping with Dog Anxiety Without Using Drugs:

Aggression towards other dogs Firework and Thunder Fright, Separation Anxiety, Excessive Barking

incorporating Tellington TTouch



Some symptoms of anxiety in dogs can include

- Barking excessively
- Whining
- Aggression towards people and other animals
- Shaking or Shivering
- Covering or Hiding
- Chewing paper, clothing, shoes etc.
- Scratching floor, doors, furniture etc.



Animal Centred Behaviour Solutions

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The following information contains ways of dealing with anxiety at all levels, from mild concern through to outright fear. Gentle persistence and consistent, sympathetic handling can go a long way to support a fearful dog.

1. Body Wrap and T-Shirt

A Body Wrap or T-Shirt is used as part of the Tellington TTouch method, working well on its own, but even better when combined with TTouch.

Both give the dog a sense of security that comes with body contact. The Body Wrap is easy to put on and take off and can be either worn under a harness or a coat.

They can have an immediate effect, but the effect can also build up too — the more your dog wears it, the more relaxed they can become.

If your dog is afraid of fireworks you may find it helpful to start putting it on in the evenings during September but don't worry if you haven't started early.

As soon as you get a Wrap, it is an idea to allow your dog to get used to the new feedback it is receiving from its body by putting it on for a couple of minutes, removing it, then replacing it after a short break. The Wrap or T-Shirt may be worn for short or long periods.

Throughout firework season, use the Wrap or T-Shirt while it is getting dark.

When putting on or taking equipment off, remember to breathe, this will help the dog as well as you!

DO NOT LEAVE YOUR DOG ALONE IN A BODY WRAP or CALMING BAND

If you need to leave your dog, the T-Shirt is the safer option.

For visits to the vet or groomer, put the Wrap or T-Shirt on before leaving home.

Use the Wrap or T-Shirt at any time you feel your companion may be anxious or is showing signs of anxiety, it can do no harm to try and it may help.

Some people report that their dogs actually come to them when they want the Wrap on.

The choice between Wrap or T-Shirt is entirely personal as both can support the dog at times of need but there is a guide on the back page of this leaflet.

2. Avoid eye contact

When your dog is unsure about something, they will look to you to see how you are responding. If you make eye contact with them at this time, you may confirm that there is something to be anxious about. Avoiding eye-contact will be reassuring and enables your dog to settle down.

Not making eye-contact is different to ignoring them. You can still talk in a soothing voice, stroke them or, even better, use TTouch to calm them.

3. Create a safe haven

Place comfortable bedding somewhere safe, warm and dark away from the main household traffic — most animals instinctively go behind a chair or sofa. When they are there, don't pester them — you may be adding to their anxiety. Some people have found that putting a DAP diffuser close to the dog's bed can also help.

4. Supplements

At times of stress, I have found that Skullcap & Valerian tablets (from Dorwest Herbs) invaluable for my own dog. We varied the dosage and timing to find the best ones for Meg, but it's best to start with a half dose and build up. We also supplement with Vitamin B complex (the stress vitamin).

5. Diet

Avoid any foods or treats that have any additives, preservatives or colourants as these can really add to an animal's stress levels. If you can, feed 3 times a day during firework season or at times of stress/anxiety to maintain their blood-sugar levels and ensure that any dried food is well soaked.

6. Tellington TTouch

TTouch is an easily learnt technique that can have a dramatic effect on your animal's wellbeing. Go to www.ttouchteam.co.uk to find your nearest practitioner or to find a workshop. Tension within your dog's body can cause them to react in a fearful or anxious way to situations (such as loud noises or trips to the vet); removing this tension using light circular TTouches and reconnecting their brains with their bodies allows them to think and cope better in potentially frightening situations.

7. Appropriate Exercise

Ensure that your dog gets an appropriate amount of exercise during times of stress / firework season. Their adrenalin levels will be increased, so avoid all kinds of rushing around, for instance chasing balls, and find ways to stimulate their senses of smell, hearing and sight etc.

If you have to take your dog out after dark, ensure that:

- their collar is adjusted properly;
- ID tags are up to date;
- they cannot escape (try a double-ended lead attached to a harness and collar);
- your garden is secure.

A frightened dog will not think about what they are doing and can travel a long way to get away from the source of their fear.

8. Breathe!!

Anxiety is infectious and you may start to breathe shallowly when you anticipate your dog's anxiety. By ensuring that your breathing is relaxed and steady, you can signal to them that there really is every reason to feel calm too.

I hope that you are able to enjoy potentially challenging situations without the usual anxiety about your companion.

9. Helpful Resources

Items are available online at mekuti.co.uk or by telephoning 0113 2590 589.

Body Wraps come in three standard sizes: 2", 3" and 4" to suit the size of your dog.

T-shirts are supposed to be a fairly loose fit, so when measuring your dog around the ribs you must allow enough room to comfortably fit two fingers underneath the tape measure. **HotterDog Jumpers** work in the same way and are excellent outdoors.

Calming Bands help to reduce anxiety which can reduce barking and help stop your dog 'getting into the zone' when outside meeting other animals or when you have visitors at home. The Band goes around the head and is elasticated over the snout which means your dog is not restricted in any way. Your dog remains comfortable, can still breathe, drink and even still bark, but hopefully not as much.

The AHIMSA Dog Training Manual, by Grisha Stewart, is an excellent book that can help with your dog's reactivity.

All these products and other ideas which may be helpful are available from our website, www.mekuti.co.uk