



Clever Creatures –Winterproof your pup!

Preventing Storm Phobia and Toileting problems in young dogs

Some young dogs have not yet experienced rain, or at least very little, and dogs born toward the end of last year have not yet experienced the cold weather or a storm! This means for some dogs there is potential for toileting issues inside, or a regression in toilet training, & maybe even storm phobia which can be much worse.

If you have a young dog now is the time to start working on it! Be sure to take your dog out on these cooler & wet mornings & encourage (& reward) for toileting outside. Some dogs don't like to get their feet wet or cold and if you don't help them along at this time there is a very good chance your dog may start toileting inside during Winter; this is the last thing you want every Winter. I can guarantee we get numerous calls about this every year but it can be prevented, and it's much easier to prevent it than trying to undo bad habits (& damage to inside flooring).

If your young dog has not yet been exposed to thunder or stormy weather it's really beneficial to prepare them! You can download the sounds of thunder, hail and rain for free. Along with this you can also download instructions on how to desensitise your young dog to these loud and scary noises. If you search Sounds Scary for dogs on the internet you will see the Dogs Trust has provided all of this valuable information for free.

In addition to exposing your dog to the sounds of storms before they are scared by them be sure to make your dog safe the first few times that storms or bad weather are forecast. If you can't be home for them, make sure they are secure inside and perhaps get someone to dog sit. If you are home, then give your dog attention and comfort and even dare to have some fun with them during bad weather! I like to play find it games indoors with my dogs during a storm. It's a great distraction for everyone involved.



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Other things that can help keep your dogs calm during a storm may include, a Thunder shirt for your dog. This is like a snug fitting vest which applies gentle but firm pressure to your dogs' body. It has been well known to provide calming effects in a large percentage of dogs.

You may also give your dog supplements to keep them calmer during winter or before storms are forecast. You can chat to your vet about Zylkene (a natural supplement) or visit a larger pet store for vitamin B & tryptophan supplements. Both of these would need to be given in the days leading up to stormy weather. Just be sure to check with your vet before giving any supplements to your dog if your dog is already on any medications. Immediately before a storm is due you can try rescue remedy or a herbal solution for dogs (such as natural animal solutions Calm). Other things to try are to use essential oils in a diffuser; just be sure to research dog safe options and place it in an area where your dog can move away from it if they wish. And no harm on leaving the radio on for some background noise when you go out! You can even download calming music for dogs these days as well!