



We put a twinkle in your eye, a smile on your face, a song in your heart, skills in your hands, so that the time with your family dog will be some of the best times of your life.

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Issue 20

Healthy Dog: Thunder Phobia

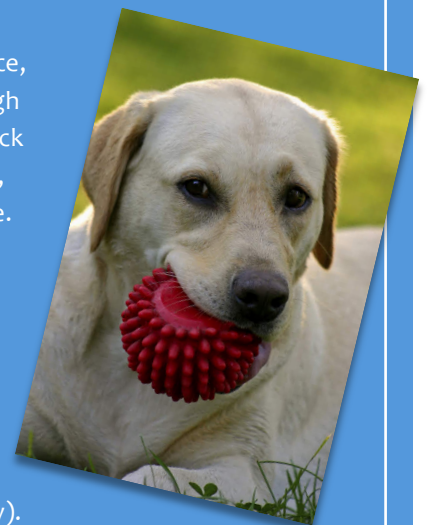
As anyone can attest who has an afflicted pooch in the house, thunder phobia is a torment for many dogs. The exact triggers are hard to pinpoint, because some dogs who react badly to thunder aren't nearly as sensitive to other loud noises. Contributing factors may include barometric pressure changes, static electricity, and low-frequency rumbles that human ears don't pick up on.



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Dog in the Spotlight: Labrador Retriever

Stomach on legs, expert swimmer and counter surfer, famously trainable — the Lab is a dog of many distinctions. The well-socialised Lab is bouncy outdoors, gentle when cuddling on the sofa, and can put her paw to anything from tracking to agility, from competitive obedience to police and therapy work. The Lab is a well-known breed worldwide, even in countries where the Kleenex Puppy ad has never run on TV. Life with a Lab is not without challenges, though. Given half a chance, she'll chew her way through carpets and shoes, eat snack wrappers off the footpath, and dive into any mud hole. Training and ample exercise is a must if your Lab is to thrive. Catch recent Labs in the limelight in *Orange is the New Black* (Little Boo the therapy dog) or in *Who Gets the Dog?* (Wesley).



cont.

....Thunder phobia

Some dogs pant, shake, pace, whine, or drool, and try to hide in the closet. Others are gripped by uncontrollable panic and try desperate things to get away from the scary storm, including crashing through windows or running headlong into traffic. Not every thunder phobic dog can be cured, but many have been helped by gentle desensitisation such as the playing of a CD with sounds of thunderstorms at extremely low volume, which is then gradually increased over several months. Another option, if your dog is able to take treats during a storm, is to dish out something extra special with each thunderclap.

Before trying any treatment always get expert guidance from your vet or dog trainer — and start well before thunderstorm season. If all else fails, talk to your veterinarian about calming medication.



Tips & Tools: When Kids Meet Dogs

It's widely believed that children should approach unfamiliar dogs by sticking a hand out to be sniffed. But an outstretched hand doesn't actually put a pooch at ease. Instead:

Ask first. Always ask the owner's permission. If the owner is not around, don't approach, however friendly the dog seems.

Wait for it. When you have permission, crouch down and let the dog come to you. If the dog doesn't approach, respect that and leave it alone.

Pet wisely. Pet the dog's back or chest, not the top of its head. Many dogs are sensitive about having their heads touched.

No face time. Staring directly at a dog or putting your face close to his can feel like a threat to the dog. Look away with regular intervals and speak in a soft, soothing tone.

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Website: cheerfuldogs.com

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Professional dog walking you can trust

Website: cheerfuldogswalking.com

Tel: 9630 3884

Email: cheerfuldogswalking@gmail.com

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