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# EXPOSURE TO NOISES

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Many dogs will become startled or afraid when they hear loud noises (vacuum, lawn mower, washing machine, doorbell etc) especially if the noise is sudden and unpredictable (fireworks, thunderstorms etc). You can help your dog become more resilient and cope better when routine or unexpected noises occur, through gradual positive exposure to the stimulus.

## Steps to exposing your dog to noisy objects:

### 1. *Start with the object turned off and not making any noise.*

- Give your dog treats when they see or investigate the object to create a positive association.

### 2. *Try turning the object on with the dog a long distance away from the object.*

- Gradually decrease the distance between the object and the dog, rewarding generously.
- If the dog is showing signs of stress about the noise, then go back to a distance where the dog is comfortable and taking treats.
- You may have to split the exposure over several training sessions and slowly decrease the distance between the object and the dog.

For moving objects such as vacuum cleaners and lawn mowers progress to step 3:

### 3. *With the object turned off, start pushing it around as you would when vacuuming or mowing the lawn.*

- Have your dog a distance away from the object in an area where you would like them when you are vacuuming or lawn mowing, such as their bed or crate.
- Provide your dog with an enrichment item or have another person rewarding the dog with treats, pats, or a toy.

### 4. *If your dog remained calm with the previous steps, turn the vacuum or lawn mower on.*

- Again, provide a rewarding activity for the dog in a safe area.

Through gradual exposure to a noisy stimulus, you are teaching your dog that when noisy things happen it is not that scary and its ok for them to relax in their safe area.

## *Positive Exposure to Outside Noises – Fireworks or Thunderstorms*

Select a quiet location with minimal distractions. Play recordings of storms or fireworks very softly and give your dog treats or a relaxing massage to show them that good things happen when they hear the noise. Over a few sessions gradually increase the volume of the recording. Only increase the volume in small increments to ensure your dog is still happy and calm with each increase. If you are expecting a new arrival in your household, this method can also be used to desensitize your dog to a baby's cry.