



The most important time for socialisation for your dog is between 3-14 weeks of age. It is important that between this time frame, that your puppy is slowly and gradually introduced to things that may trigger a fearful response. Something that we regularly have caregivers comment on is that their dog is noise phobic. This means that the dog is reacting in a fearful manner to the sound of loud noises. This can be anything from traffic to fireworks.

Sometimes, your dog may be involved in a situation where a noise has triggered a fearful response and so now any noise that is remotely similar, can trigger an upsetting response from your dog. There have been some instances where behavioural responses have been triggered not from the noise, but rather the context in which that noise first occurred. For example, where a dog has been present at a firework display where there was also a large public gathering and a bonfire and the firework display has caused distress. That dog may now associate large gatherings or the smell of a bonfire with loud noises that caused him/her to be frightened.

It is therefore vital, as caregivers, to make sure we appropriately socialise our dogs. Sound therapy is an important part of your puppies' socialisation journey. We recommend using The Dogs Trust "Sounds Scary" tracks, they have an array of different sounds to try. See below link to their website;

- <https://soundcloud.com/dogstrust/sets/sound-therapy-sounds-scary>
- <https://soundcloud.com/dogstrust/sets/sound-therapy-sounds-scary-1>

Preparing for Sound Therapy

When preparing to start therapy, do this when the dog is not around as you may need to test your speaker at different volume levels which could cause distress. Choose a room that is one the dog spends a lot of time in and usually relaxes/sleeps in. We recommend when starting out, keep the volume very low and give treats or play with your puppy so that the association with the sounds is positive. Gradually, you can build up the volume, but judge this on how reactive or non-reactive your puppy is to the sounds.

As the age old saying goes, "prevention is better than cure". This is especially true in the case of noise phobia prevention. It is much easier to desensitise our puppies to potentially frightening noises than to try counter conditioning your older more fearful dog. Even if your puppy is born at the beginning of the year, won't it feel great to have them desensitised to fireworks by the time it comes around in October/November time?

Lastly, another hopefully useful tip is the need for a den/safe space. Dogs like to have somewhere to go and feel safe. You can do this by having a crate that is appropriately sized for your dog, covering it with a blanket or a corner of the room with bedding and either placing it near an Adaptil Calm diffuser or spray the bedding with Adaptil Calm Travel spray. **(See other documents on Pheromone Treatment)**

For more information on Sound Therapy, visit;

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/downloads/sounds%20scary%20booklet%20dogs%20trust.pdf>