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# SITS & WIGGLES

The Newsletter of the Animal Clinic of Chardon

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your Dog's Mind*



## 6 WAYS TO CALM YOUR PET'S THUNDER FEARS

Summer is almost upon us! For most, warmer weather represents a joyous time to be outdoors enjoying nature with friends and family.

For some pet owners, however, it signifies the start of thunderstorm season, with resulting anxiety for furry family members.

Insights from Fear Free certified professional trainers can help you lessen your pet's fear, but first, why are some dogs and cats afraid of storms?

Thunderstorm phobia has several possible causes: the loud noise and bright flashes of light, changes in atmospheric pressure, or the shock of static electricity. And their keen senses mean that pets have built-in early warning systems. Camille Asmer, CDBC, IAABC-ADT, CBCC, CPDT, of Sit, Stay, Play Dog Training and Behavior in Charlotte, North Carolina, says, "The thing that's hard about thunderstorms is dogs know long before they happen. Long before we even think they will happen."

We can't always know the exact trigger for a pet. Furthermore, no one-size-fits-all method will work to quell a dog's unpleasant feelings about thunderstorms. "Everything depends on the dog in front of you," says Asmer. (Continued on next page)



# 6 WAYS TO CALM YOUR PET'S THUNDER FEARS (CONTINUED)

## Reading the Signals

Your pet's body language tells a story. Being able to read it helps you to understand when they're afraid and describe their behavior accurately when seeking help.

A thunder-phobic pet may show one or more of the following signs:

- Pacing or restlessness
- Lip licking, panting, or drooling
- Trembling or shaking
- Hiding
- Clinginess
- Vocalizing (whining, barking, howling, or yowling)
- Destructive behavior
- Trying to escape



## What to Do

The important thing is that you never want to ignore the problem. "If we ignore them and leave them alone to just deal with it, we're only teaching them, 'I'm not going to be around for you when you need me,'" says Shannon Burke, CPDT-KA, ABCDT, owner and head trainer of emBark Dog Training and Boarding in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Asmer and Burke suggest a few tips that may help:

**Provide your pet with a safe space.** Depending on their preference, that can be a crate with the door left open or a dark corner of a room with their bed and blankets.

**Play calming music** (think reggae, classical, soft rock, yoga music, and music composed to help calm dogs) or other background sounds to help drown out the thunderclap.

**Provide interesting and entertaining distractions**, like a stuffed Kong, lick pad, or puzzle toy that will keep them engaged and occupied.

**Snug garments** such as Thundershirts work well for some dogs. Much like a hug, their gentle pressure is thought to release endorphins, hormones produced by the body when it's under stress, resulting in a sense of wellbeing.

**Ask your veterinarian about medications** such as Sileo, the only FDA-approved medication for dogs with noise phobias; anti-anxiety nutraceuticals such as Zylkene, Solliquin, and Composure; or pheromone products such as Adaptil.

**Plan ahead.** If you know a storm is coming while you are at work, set up a safe space beforehand and administer medication if possible. If the fear is severe, see if you can call on a neighbor or pet sitter to keep them company.

Finding what works for your dog is a process, Burke says. "It's going to be different for every dog and a lot of trial and error. Every dog is an individual and do not compare one dog to another dog, because it's detrimental to the dog in front of you."

And like people, dogs grow and evolve as they get older and have new experiences. Burke says: "Your dog is not a computer. You don't just download the system and it's going to run for the rest of their life. They go through so many different adaptations as they continue to age."

As a result, anything from moving to having a new animal or human sibling to hearing a loud noise for the first time can influence a new behavior in a dog, no matter what age they are. No one wants their pet to feel emotional discomfort. While the journey to discovering what works for your pet may take time, the effort you put forth will not be in vain. The time spent will allow you to bond with your dog and show them you are going to support them through it all. *Written by Fairouz El-Baz*

# SPRING-TIME DOG BISCUITS

## Ingredients

- 2 cups Whole Wheat Flour
- 1 cup rolled oats, old-fashioned or quick-cooking
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley or 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 cup nonfat dry milk
- 1/2 teaspoon table salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup peanut butter, crunchy or plain
- 1/2 cup + 1 tablespoon cold water, enough to make a cohesive dough

## Instructions

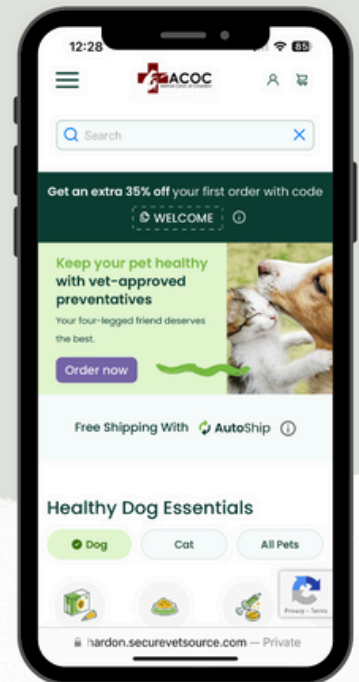
1. Preheat the oven to 300°F. Lightly grease a couple of baking sheets, or line them with parchment.
2. Mix together the flour, oats, parsley, dried milk, and salt.
3. Add the eggs and peanut butter, stirring to combine; the mixture will be crumbly.
4. Add enough water to bring the dough together; depending on the season, you may need to add a bit more (winter), or a bit less (summer).
5. To make biscuits using a dog-bone cutter, roll the dough about 1/4" thick, and cut with a 3 1/2" cutter (or the size of your choice). Gather and re-roll the scraps, and continue to cut biscuits until you've used all the dough.
6. To make dog "cookies," drop the dough in walnut-sized balls onto the prepared baking sheets. Flatten them to about 1/4".
7. Bake the biscuits for about 40 to 60 minutes, baking the smaller cookies for a shorter amount of time. When finished, the biscuits will be dark golden brown, and will be dry and crisp all the way through.
8. Remove the biscuits from the oven, and cool right on the pans.



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the power to speak a  
great language.”  
-Martin Buber***

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**Summer - 5/14**  
**Andy - 5/20**

