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Anxiety natural treatment.

Whole Dog Journal has published a number of articles on natural ways to help a dog deal with phobias and various anxiety, before resorting to the use of drugs,

including the following:

- **Anxiety Wrap** ("[It's a Wrap](#)," December 2002). Also see **Thundershirt** (also available at [Amazon](#)).
- **Dog Appeasing Pheromones** ("[Please Appease Me](#)," January 2004).
- **T-Touch** ("[A Touch Should Do It](#)," July 1998)

- **Massage** ("[Lay Your Hands On Dogs](#)," July 2004)
- **Calmative Herbs** ("[Stop the Panic](#)," September 2003)
- **Flower Essence Remedies** ("[Flower Power](#)," March 1999)
- **Essential Oils** ("[Essential Information](#)," January 2005, and "[Smell This, You'll Feel Better](#)," December 2004)

Also see the following WDJ articles on anxiety:

- **Separation Anxiety:** "[Relieving Anxiety](#)," August 2001, and "[Learning To Be Alone](#)," July 2001
- **Noise Phobias:** "[When the Thunder Rolls](#)," April 2000, and "[Bring In Da Noise](#)," May 2000
- **Fears, Anxieties and Phobias:** [Reducing Your Dog's Anxieties](#), April 2007

Two of the articles above;

Relieving Anxiety

Reducing your Dog's Anxieties, are also available in the WDJ booklet, ***Mending His Ways: Saying Good-Bye to Bad Behaviors*** available from the [Whole Dog Journal](#).

A few more suggestions:

- Noise sensitivities and fearfulness can be linked to [hypothyroidism](#).
Some dogs improve with treatment, even when they have no other signs of hypothyroidism.
A full thyroid panel or Free T4 by Equilibrium Dialysis can help determine whether your dog might be hypothyroid (the total T4 screening test is not enough to rule it out).

- **SAM-e (s-adenyl methionine) & Melatonin** (see [below](#)) & **Magnesium** are also used to treat anxiety. SAM-e is an antidepressant and is liver protective. Also helps the liver deal with the other drugs.
- **Krill & fish oil & The probiotic *Bifidobacterium longum*** have been found to ease anxiety in studies (see [Boosting tranquility through nutrition](#) for more information). One person reported her dog's anxiety improving greatly when she added **fish oil** to the diet. Within 10 days, the dog was calm, with no signs of anxiety. The dog is currently being weaned off anti-anxiety medications and so far has had no further signs of anxiety. Give an amount of fish oil that provides from 100 to 300 mg EPA and DHA combined per 10 pounds of body weight daily.
- A friend has had good luck treating her dog's thunder phobia with a high dose of **calcium/magnesium** and the **Chinese herbal formula known as "Calm Spirit"** (Modified Ding Xin Wan) from the company Health Concerns, available only thru veterinarians.
- **L-theanine** is an amino acid that some have used to treat anxiety and phobias (Food and behavior – Can food have an influence on behavior? by Sabine Schroll, DVM). Vetri-Science, a company whose products I like, offers [Composure Liquid](#) (available at [Amazon](#)), also called [Calming Formula](#) from Pet Naturals (same company, also available at [Amazon](#)) for dogs and cats that contains L-theanine and other ingredients. The same product comes in chewable form called [Calming Soft Chews](#) for both small and medium/large dogs ([Amazon](#)).

The amount is 10.56 mg L-theanine per 1/4 teaspoon or small chew, which is the dosage they recommend twice a day per 25 lbs (11 kg) or less of body weight (dosage can be doubled or tripled during times of stress).

An over-the-counter veterinary product called [Anxitane](#) is now available, where the suggested dosage is 25 mg L-theanine twice a day for dogs less than 10 kg (22 lbs), 50 mg twice a day for dogs 10 to 25 kg (22 to 55 lbs), and 100 mg twice a day for dogs over 25 kg (55 lbs).

Another product called [Grand Tranquility](#) (available at [Amazon](#)) contains 20 mg L-theanine per wafer. L-theanine is also available in human supplements, though dosages (usually 100 to 200 mg per tablet) would only be suitable for large dogs.

- **Update:** A friend's dog was anxious in the car, whining and whimpering both while driving and while waiting in the car for nose work trials. She tried Calming Soft Chews, and her dog slept all the way to the trial and never whined during the trial. He was able to search well without being frantic (as he often is when searching), so he was not sedated, and earned his title.
- **L-tryptophan**, an amino acid, and **alpha-casozepine**, a component of milk whose action is similar to benzodiazepines, have been found to help ease anxiety.
L-tryptophan supplements are readily available, but alpha-casozepine is hard to find.
It is marketed as [De-Stress](#) from Biotics Research in Canada (available at [Amazon](#)) and [Zylkene](#) in the UK. Alpha-casozepine is also called [Lactium](#), which can be found in a variety of supplements.

- **See the following for more information:**

- [Zylkene](#) (includes recommended dosage information)
- [Can Diet be Used to Help Anxious Dogs?](#)
- [Dealing With Canine Anxiety and Phobias](#)
- [Effects of prescription diet on dealing with stressful situations and performance of anxiety-related behaviors in privately owned anxious dogs](#)
- [Effects of alpha-casozepine \(Zylkene\) versus selegiline hydrochloride \(Selgian, Anipryl\) on anxiety disorders in dogs](#)

- When giving tiny pills, I find they sometimes get stuck in my dog's lips.

Wrapping them in a bit of string cheese has solved that problem for us, but I've since found that [Pill Pockets](#) work even better -- the smell is very enticing, and you can pinch off just enough to cover the pill, making each one last a long time (I used to think they were too expensive because I thought you had to use a whole pill pocket each time you gave pills).

Note that Pill Pockets are now available in a [Duck and Pea Allergy Formula](#) for dogs with food allergies.

- An aromatherapy product called [Chill Pill](#) made by Aura Cacia may help calm some nervous dogs.
This is a liquid, not a pill. A friend who helps rehabilitate rescued puppy mill dogs recommends putting a drop on a small piece of fabric such as a piece of knit fabric possibly 2-3" wide by 8-10" long that can be tied on the back of the dog's harness.

- Here the fragrance will be where the dog can smell it but will not be *right* in their very sensitive nose. Do not put it on the dog's skin or fur.
- **GABA** (gamma-aminobutyric acid) may have a calming effect when taken orally (benzodiazepines work by increasing the effect of GABA on the brain).
It is found in many calming products.

Certain types of **music** may have a calming influence.

Use natural anti-anxiety, calming remedies. If you're in the midst of a thunderstorm watch or warning and you know your dog is going to panic, there are several options that may help her to calm down:

[Ttouch](#) is a specific massage technique that can help anxious pets. You can also consider trying Emotional Freedom Techniques ([EFT](#)) to help your four-legged companion.

An anxiety wrap made from an [ace bandage](#) (or a commercially available coat for stress).

Provide an [Adaptil](#) pheromone diffuser for your dog. Pheromones are chemical substances that can positively affect an animal's emotional state and behavior.

CBD oil may also help.

Consult a holistic veterinarian about homeopathic, TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) and Bach Flower Remedies that may be beneficial in alleviating your dog's fear.

Products I use (always in conjunction with behavioral interventions) include Calm Shen, homeopathic aconitum or [Hyland's Calms Forte](#), [Rescue Remedy](#), [Storm Soother](#) or other similar remedies depending on the pet's symptoms.

Calming nutraceuticals and herbs that I've found helpful include holy

basil (Tulsi), valerian, l-theanine, rhodiola, ashwagandha, GABA, 5-HTP and chamomile.

Consult your holistic vet about which option is right for your pet.

- **Some music is available specifically for dogs:**

- [Dogs and Music: Tips for helping your dog relax](#)
- [Through a Dog's Ear](#) (more info [here](#))
- [Canine Lullabies](#) (more info [here](#))
- [DogGone Songs](#)
- [While You Are Gone: Music Pets Love](#) and [Music Dogs Love](#)
- [Relaxation Music For Dogs and Cats](#) (more info [here](#))

- [Storm Defender Cape](#) helps some dogs with storm phobias. It has to do with the electrical charge that can build up during thunderstorms.

This cape would not be as helpful for dogs with other noise phobias, such as fireworks, though a small study showed that there was 35% to 40% improvement using a placebo cape (without the insulating liner), compared to 70% improvement with the real cape, possibly due to the "hugging" effect, similar to an Anxiety Wrap or Thundershirt (see above).

- [Mutt Muffs](#) and [Happy Hoodie](#) block loud noises and have helped some dogs who are afraid of fireworks or thunder.
- [Calming Collar](#) Herbs create calming scent that was helpful to at least one dog with storm phobia.
- [Calming Cap](#) can help reduce the impact of things the dog sees, such as lightning.
It is not a blindfold, but uses sheer fabric to limit vision. Also available at [Amazon](#).

- See [The Human-Canine Bond: Can Play Cure PTSD in Dogs?](#) for an excellent article on using play therapy to treat dogs with noise phobias.
- Medical marijuana may help with anxiety in dogs. There are high-CBD varieties available that will not make your dog "stoned." See my article, [Dogs Going to Pot? Marijuana Toxicosis and Medical Uses for Dogs](#), for more information.
- [Shen Calmer](#) from Jing Tang, a Chinese herbal blend for anxiety and nervousness, helped one dog I know who was anxious in new environments (he takes it regularly, not as needed). Available primarily from vets, but can be found from certain vets online, including [Dr. Wendy Ying](#) and [Well Being Medicine for Animals](#).