

15 Easy Tips

TO CALM A RESTLESS



Dog



AT NIGHT

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PREFACE

A good night's sleep is important for you and your doggo.

But plot twist: your dog gets restless at night.

All the pacing and crying don't spell beauty rest for both of you.

So what do you do when your dog can't sleep at night?

Keep reading to learn:

- 3 easy games to tire out your pooch.
- 15 tips to calm a restless dog at night.
- The method for training them to settle down.
- Precisely why you should let your dog have their own bed.
- And many more...

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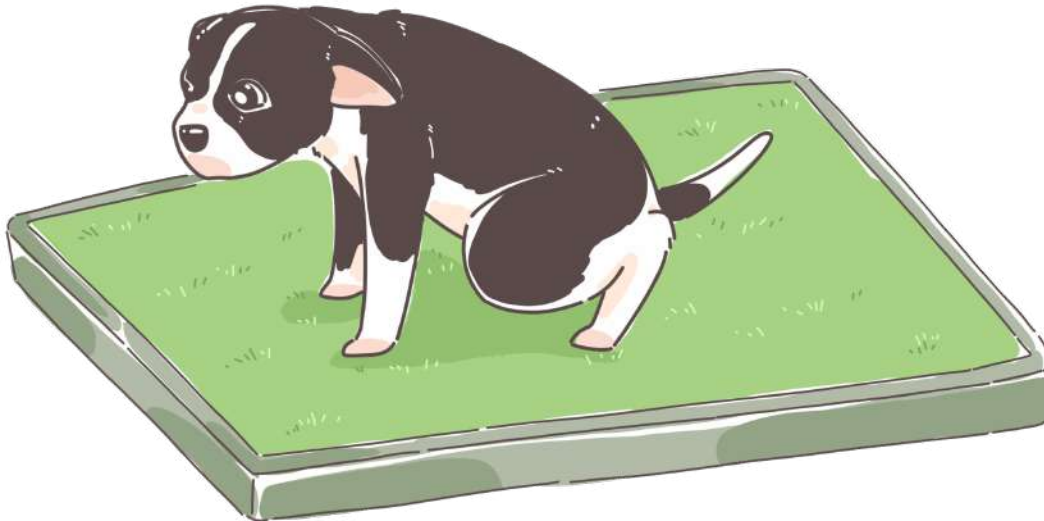
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How to calm a restless dog at night?

To calm a restless dog at night, have them do these: go potty, exercise, eat, and settle in their bed or crate. You can play soothing music, make their bed comfortable, and give them a quiet space. Or schedule a visit to the vet, the reason may be underlying medical issues.

15 tips to calm a restless dog at night

#1: Go potty



Maybe the reason your dog gets restless is because they want to go potty.

Always make this a part of their evening routine.

Especially if your dog is still a puppy that hasn't learned to control their bladder yet.

There will be accidents.

But it is beneficial for them to learn when and where to go potty.

Female dogs in heat also have to go outside more often.

So don't get surprised when they get restless at night.

According to VCA, they will usually pee more than normal. Or urinate in small amounts in various places.^[1]

This happens because her urine contains pheromones and hormones. It signals males in the area that she's ready for breeding.

#2: Exercise before going to bed

One of the main reasons why dogs get restless is they aren't tired.

Even after they've had their nightly walkies their energy levels are too high to settle.

So you can do some games or indoor exercises to tire your dog.

It's important to remember that dogs need both mental and physical stimulation.

Having both in their daily activities will help them spend their energy.

Blue Cross UK recommends the following games:^[2]

"Find it"

Step 1: Have your dog in a *"Sit"* position in front of you.

Step 2: Show them a treat in your hand.

Step 3: Say *"Find it"* and toss the treat away from you.

Step 4: When your dog locates the treat, praise them with a marker like “Yes” or “Good dog”. Repeat steps 1-4 a few times. Your dog will learn to associate the command with going to find the treat.

Step 5: Next, have your dog in a “Stay”. Toss the treat. Make sure your pooch stays in position.

Step 6: Release your dog with the command “Find it”.

Step 7: Mark correct behavior with a “Yes” or a “Good dog”. Wait for your dog to come back to you.

Step 8: Once they do, let them “Sit” and reward them with a high-value treat. This encourages the dog to come back to you.

Tug of war

You can also use this game to teach your dog how to play with good manners.

Step 1: Have your dog “Sit” in front of you.

Step 2: Hold out a tug rope in front of your dog. If they move toward it, move the rope away. Let them return to a “Sit”.

Step 3: Once your dog stays put even if the rope is near them, hold it out again.

Step 4: Say “Play” and make encouraging noises for your dog to bite the rope.

Step 5: Once your dog bites it, play tug for a little while. Letting your dog win the game. This makes them want to play with you more.

Step 6: After a few minutes of play, remove the rope and say, “All done”. If your dog doesn’t want to give up the rope, say your marker for incorrect

behavior like “*Uh-uh*”. And stop playing. Mark correct behavior when they leave it alone.

Step 8: Have your dog return to a “*Sit*” and reward with a treat.

Trick training

This is a great way to tickle the brains of your pooch. It helps them get exercise and learn new things.

Trick training also provides a way to improve communication with your dog.

And with time, learning new tricks becomes easier.

Here’s a cool trick you can teach your doggo: balancing treats on their nose.

Step 1: Let your dog get comfortable with the sensation of having stuff on their nose. Touch a treat and mark the action with your desired marker “*Yes*”, “*Good*”, or a clicker.

Step 2: Make the nose touches longer and longer. You may have to repeat it a few times. Make sure your dog’s engaged in the training.

Step 3: Next, add a “*Wait*” or a “*Stay*”. Then touch the treat to their nose. If your dog keeps their attention on you and doesn’t move, mark the behavior, then give the treat.

Step 4: Again, touch the treat for longer times in each turn.

Step 5: Start placing the treat on their nose and letting go. By this time your dog should have learned that staying still allows them to have the reward.

Take baby steps when doing this with your dog. Always confirm that they learn every single step building up to the trick.

It will take some time and a lot of patience.

But teaching this trick will exercise your dog's focus on you. Which is especially useful in times of distractions.

#3: Teach your dog to settle down

This is a very useful exercise that gives your dog time to chill out and relax. Even if they're in a stressful environment.

Battersea UK teaches this exercise because it releases dopamine. This allows your dog to feel good. And also *glutamate*, the hormone linked to:^[3]

- Memory.
- Learning.
- Cognition.
- Brain development.

All you need is a mat or a dog bed. With some high-value treats.

“How do I teach this to my dog?”

Step 1: Place a mat on the floor. And allow your dog to investigate. Every time your dog goes near the mat, throw a treat on the mat. This helps them make a positive association with the mat itself.

Step 2: Keep encouraging your dog to go on the mat. Reward them for every step in the right direction. Such as 1 or 2 paws on the mat. With a few repetitions, your dog will become comfortable standing on the mat.

Step 3: When your dog stands on the mat without showing intentions to move away. Ask them to lie down. And reward with a treat on the mat.

Step 4: Repeat step 3 until your dog lies down on the mat whenever you bring it out. Wait for them to rest their head on it and reward.

Step 5: Delay giving their treat by a few seconds and keep building the wait time. In time your dog will be comfortable just lying down on the mat.

Step 6: Let them adjust to being by themselves by moving a few steps away. And reward them if they stay on the mat.

Step 7: Up the ante by doing the exercise in other places. You don't need a command. The mat activates the learned behavior in your dog. Just spread it out and reward your dog for chilling out.

Emphasize the relaxed behavior by rewarding them with high-value treats.

#4: Feed a few hours before bedtime

Dogs need a regular feeding schedule. It helps them adjust to changes better.

It also allows for a predictable potty schedule. So it makes training easier.

“At what hours should I feed my dog?”

Sample feeding schedule			
Age	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Puppies (14-18 weeks)	7: 00 AM	12:00 PM	5:00 PM
Adult dogs	7:00 AM	None	7:00 PM
	7:00 AM	12:00 PM	7:00 PM

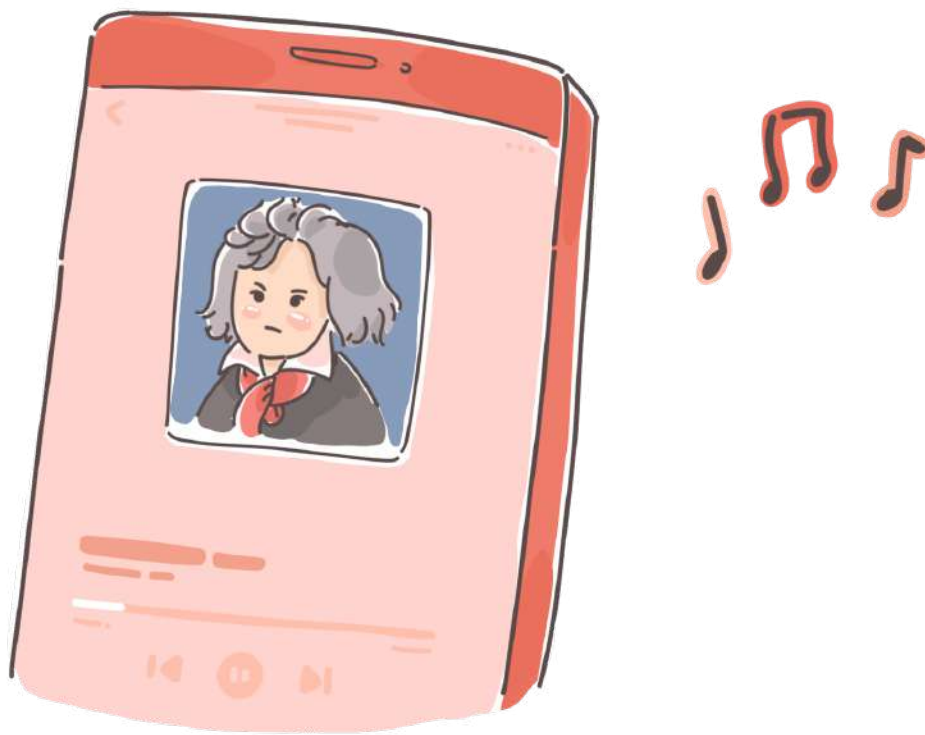
According to PetMD, puppies should have dinner at 5 PM, so their stomach has enough time to digest. And they can go potty before going to bed.^[4]

Adult dogs can eat 2 to 3 meals per day. Just ensure to measure out enough portions to fulfill their needs for the whole day.

The VCA says that their meals shouldn't be more than 12 hours apart. More than that can cause hyperacidity and nausea.^[5]

⚠ Warning: Always follow a feeding schedule. Don't free-feed your dog. It can lead to obesity and other weight-related issues.

#5: Play soothing music



A little bit of Beethoven and Bach can calm a restless dog.

Dogs have positive responses to classical music. Especially in times of stress.

And behavioral changes are possible with soothing music.

In one study, 117 dogs spent more time sleeping in their kennels, than barking.^[6]

And in another experiment, the genres of soft rock and reggae also had calming effects on dogs. But on the downside, they barked when the music stopped.^[7]

#6: Prepare comfortable sleeping areas

Your restless pooch might be feeling like a pea under their mattress.

I mean, who doesn't want a warm comfortable bed for sleeping?

Having their own bed gives your dog a place to chill out and relax.

This is also beneficial if your dog suffers from bone-related issues like arthritis.

[Orthopedic dog beds](#) give support to aching joints. While being comfortable at the same time.

These have special foams (egg-crate or memory). It cushions the pressure points and provides enough air circulation.

There are also [calming dog beds](#) that are donut-shaped to give a sense of security. These also have faux fur outside to mimic a mother dog's fur. And provide burrowing opportunities.

So which will you choose?

The AKC reminds dog parents that good beds will:^[8]

- Support joints.
- Be easy to clean.
- Guarantee better sleep.

- Provide a relaxation spot.



Note: Buy beds that are proportionate to your dog's size and sleeping habits. Take note of the material of the bed stuffings as your dog might be allergic or sensitive to some.

#7: Give them a quiet space

If you bought your pooch a comfortable bed...

The next step is to make sure they're in calm surroundings.

This helps with dogs who are sensitive or reactive to sounds.

Being in a room where people go in and out isn't relaxing.

So keep your dog in a room away from the hustle and bustle of the house.

This will become their hangout spot when they need to be alone.

Help your dog to have positive associations with this space.

"How do I make them like their room?"

Step 1: Set up their bed in a quiet room in the house.

Step 2: Lead your dog inside. Reward them if they take a step into it or start investigating. Just toss the treats onto the floor. This lets them know that the room isn't so bad.

Step 3: Let your pooch go to their bed once they're comfortable with the new environment.

Step 4: Have them on a “*Lie down*” and reward them with a treat on the bed. Go outside for a short while and come back in. If they’re still on the bed, give them a reward.

If not, repeat this step but only move a few steps away.

Step 5: Move further once your dog gets comfortable until you’re able to go out in short intervals.

Step 6: As training progresses, make the wait times longer and longer. And of course, reward your dog if they’re:

- Calm.
- On the bed.
- Inside the room.

You can let your dog sleep in the room at night. Or just keep it as their own space and let them spend the night in your room.

The important thing is they have a place where they can relax and chill out.

#8: Give your dog time to play alone

Now that your dog feels comfortable in their own room, set aside some time in the day.

Leave your dog alone with some toys. These will stimulate their physical and mental capabilities.

Teaching your dog to enjoy being alone helps build their confidence and independence.

It also tires them out and leaves you with a relaxed pooch.

You can say goodbye to the restless nights of trying to calm them down.

Because after a day of playing they will go to sleep at bedtime.

Want to know which toys to buy?

Read the next tip for my suggestions.

#9: Enrichment puzzle toys



Puzzle toys are great for keeping your dog occupied when you need to leave them alone.

According to RSPCA, these toys will help your dog:^[9]

- Relax.
- Get tired.
- Prevent chewing.
- Improve learning.
- Become independent.

Puzzle toys also help to ease the symptoms of anxiety. Which includes pacing or restlessness.

You can also give their dinner in a puzzle toy such as a frozen, [stuffed KONG](#).

This gives your pooch an activity that tires them out.

KONGs are great because you get these all in one:

- Chew toy.
- Enrichment.
- Food puzzle.

But they aren't the only toys available on the market.

There are:

- [Snuffle mats](#).
- [Food puzzles](#).
- [Treat dispensing toys](#).

Buy at least 4 to 5 different toys and rotate usage. So that your dog doesn't get bored playing with them.

#10: Keep your dog close

Now this doesn't mean that your pooch has to join you all the time.

But it's because there are so many reasons why your dog is restless.

Your new puppy could still be adjusting to their new place.

Or your good old Fido gets confused and anxious. It's a normal occurrence for senior dogs.

“Does this mean that my dog has to sleep with me on my bed?”

It is up to your personal preference where you let your dog sleep.

And other times most dogs will show a preference.

For example, small and short-haired breeds have a tendency for snuggling.

While most larger and long-haired dogs prefer to sleep on the floor.

There may be some benefit to letting your dog sleep near you, and not on the bed, a study finds.^[10]

In 2015, 40 dog parents and their dogs participated in an experiment. They wore an accelerometer that recorded sleep quality.

All the adults were healthy and had no sleep disorders. The dogs, all older than 6 months.

The researchers found that people had better quality sleep when the dog was in the room but not on the bed.

#11: Massage your pooch

Touch is one of the most important communication tools between a dog parent and their pooch.

It activates the hormone oxytocin, which boosts bonding and trust.

And this affects the secretions of dopamine and serotonin, the feel-good hormones.

The whole process of touching your dog relieves stress and anxiety. Not just for your pooch but for you, too.

Research has found that dogs actually prefer touching to a “*Good doggy*”.^[11]

The scientists did the experiment using three types of interaction:

- Owned dogs with owners.
- Shelter dogs with strangers.
- Owned dogs with strangers.

The dogs spent time near the experimenter when it was time for pets. But didn't show interest when it was only praise.

In fact, it produced the same results as when the experimenter ignored the dogs.

This brings you to the next question, which is...

“How do I massage my dog?”

Touch is a great feeling for your dog. And PetMD says that massage is a great way to:^[12]

- Lower stress.
- Relieve anxiety.
- Move and condition muscles.

Consult only certified animal massage therapists. If you want to use massage as a supplementary treatment for medical problems.



Note: Your dog might feel apprehensive when you first try it. Ease them into it and massage with gentle pressure. In time, they will look forward to your sessions.

#12: Schedule a check-up for your dog

You've applied all the tips above.

But your dog's still restless?

Then it may be a sign of a more serious problem.

Schedule a check-up for your dog with the vet.

Take note of your dog's restless behavior:

1. When did it start?
2. Does it start at the same time every night?
3. Is there a specific person/area/object/ that triggers your dog?
4. Has the restlessness gotten worse from when you first noticed it?
5. Does your dog want you to touch them when they're restless?
6. How does your dog act during this time? (Take a video).

"Why do I have to tell all this information to my vet?"

It will help your vet make a quicker diagnosis. As there are a lot of possible causes for your dog's restlessness.

It's a symptom found in the following medical problems:

- Anxiety.
- Skin problems.
- Digestive issues.
- Cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS).
- Pain from - arthritis, wounds, fractures, etc.

#13: Calming coats and wraps



These can help if your dog is restless because of anxiety.

Our pups become anxious because they know something they don't like is going to happen.

For example, dogs who have storm phobia start to display the signs. When they sense that a storm is coming.

The VCA states that dogs can pick up the changes in atmospheric pressure. And how much ozone is in the air.^[13]

Some of the common anxiety indicators are:

- Pacing.
- Barking.
- Whining.

- Yawning.
- Trembling.

“How do these coats and wraps help my dog?”

It works like a never-ending hug for your dog.

The material encloses and applies gentle pressure on their back and sides.

This stimulates the secretion of endorphins that calm your pooch. And makes them feel good.

Richmond Valley Vet Practice recommends the following for your dog's anxiety:^[14]

- [AKC Stress Relief Calming Coat.](#)
- [Mellow Shirt Dog Anxiety Calming Wrap.](#)
- [Thundershirt Classic Dog Anxiety Blanket.](#)

#14: Medications

These can be helpful when your pup can't seem to settle down at night.

Medications target hormone secretion in their body. And induce a calming effect.

You can't use it as a patch for their restlessness.

It supports behavior modification training. And we'll talk about it in the next tip.

Supplements

Most of the time, these come in tablet form so you can give them to your dog without much problem.

According to PetMD, the majority contain L-theanine and S-Adenosylmethionine (SAME).^[15]

The supplements stimulate hormone production, such as dopamine and serotonin.

You can give them to dogs with mild anxiety issues.

Take for example a dog who's trigger is riding in the car.

You can give supplements a few minutes before going out.

They don't knock out your dog. It makes them calm enough to function without bad reactions.

Anti-anxiety meds

Like supplements, taking these isn't meant to be lifelong. But that will be the case for some dogs with crippling issues.

The medicines target moderate to severe anxiety. And treatment lasts for about 2 months.

Here are the common anti-anxiety medications vets prescribe as listed in PetMD:^[16]

Medication name	Anxiety type
Buspirone.	Generalized anxiety.
Amitriptyline.	Separation anxiety or more generalized anxious tendencies.
Alprazolam (Xanax).	Moderate to severe situational anxiety.
Dexmedetomidine (Sileo).	Situational anxiety (noise phobias

	and aversions).
Clomipramine (Clomicalm).	Separation anxiety and situational anxiety.

 **Warning:** Always consult your vet giving medications (synthetic or herbal) to your dog. This information is a starting point for further research. And conversations with your vet.

#15: Behavior modification training

This training involves desensitization and counter-conditioning techniques. These change the reaction to a stimulus.

Desensitization

With this, dogs stay at that threshold. Or the state of mind before they react.

Take for example, a pooch reactive to men.

The trainer will determine how near they can be to a man without reacting.

And then, they will do the next step.

Which is...

Counter conditioning

It pairs your dog's trigger with something they love, like treats.

This technique gives them positive associations. If your dog's restless or afraid of something.

So instead of reacting, they don't pay any mind. Because they're anticipating something good.

Let's continue with the illustration.

Once you find the threshold, give the dog a treat that they really like. If the man goes away, the treats also stop.

In the next session, move your pooch closer. And the process starts again.

This lets your dog learn to equal the treats with the presence of the man.

These are just examples. But experts use these techniques in many other ways.



Note: Find a certified animal behaviorist to work with your dog. Especially if your canine has severe anxiety.

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