

THE CONSEQUENCES OF RISING TEMPERATURES

Behaviour



Behaviour

As loving pet parents, we all know our pets' routines. They're very much creatures of habit, and their behaviour patterns have been reinforced by their time with us. **Any disruption to these daily rhythms can cause serious discomfort.**

RISING TEMPERATURES CAN DISRUPT OUR PETS' ROUTINES IN FOUR SPECIFIC SCENARIOS:

1. MOOD

When temperatures rise or fall directly, cats and dogs can **suffer anxiety, loss of appetite and even seasonal depression.**

2. HEAT

In periods of unusual warmth, our pets can be **vulnerable to dehydration, heat stress and even heatstroke.**

3. STRESS

Seasonal change is making extreme weather patterns, such as storms, ever more likely. **These can be terrifying for our companion animals.**

4. LESS EXERCISE

With extreme weather patterns, dogs don't get the chance to go outside and exercise. **This can lead to obesity, but also to anxiety.**

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Some behavioural pathologies in dogs and cats, such as cognitive dysfunction, anxiety, fear and storm phobias can be correlated to climate change.”



Prof. Clara Palestrini

Professor of behavioural medicine,
University of Milan



WEATHER AND PETS

The mortality rate of heatstroke in dogs is 50%

(Bruchim et al., 2017)*.

Hot weather and extreme weather prevent owners from walking their dogs, **leading to less exercise opportunities and, potentially, obesity** (Protopopova et al., 2021)**.

*Bruchim, Y., Horowitz, M., & Aroch, I. (2017). Pathophysiology of heatstroke in dogs - revisited. *Temperature (Austin, Tex.)*, 4(4), 356–370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23328940.2017.1367457>

**Protopopova, A., Ly, L. H., Eagan, B. H., & Brown, K. M. (2021). Climate change and companion animals: Identifying links and opportunities for mitigation and adaptation strategies. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icb/icab025>

How to protect your pet and your family

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO STOP RISING TEMPERATURES AND EXTREME EVENTS, BUT WE CAN ENSURE OUR ANIMALS ARE READY BY TAKING THE FOLLOWING MEASURES.

1. LOOK FOR SIGNS

Animals experiencing discomfort from the weather may show any or all of the following signs:

LOSS OF APPETITE

EXCESSIVE GROOMING

LETHARGY

EXCESSIVE BARKING OR MEOWING

RELUCTANCE TO EXERCISE

2. BE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL WITH FEMALE CATS

Cats that are in heat are more likely to 'yowl' (a higher-pitched sound than a meow) and be more affectionate than normal, rubbing up against furniture and walls, and against their favourite people. They may also try to mark their territory and leave the house in search of a mate.

3. DEAL WITH FEAR OF STORMS EARLY

Storms can be terrifying to your pets, which can lead to extreme fear and behaviour problems. If your pet becomes anxious or acts out during storms, your vet can help! Simple techniques, such as playing certain sounds on your stereo and positive training methods can help your pet learn to deal with storms. **Fear of storms should be addressed early, because it is more difficult to treat as time goes by.**



4. PROVIDE YOUR PET PROTECTION

All animals, and especially flat-faced breeds, should be given a shady space indoors, with plenty of water, during hot weather. You might even consider giving an ice cube to play with.

When it gets really nippy outside you should towel down your pet after walking, give them a pair of booties for the harsh ground and wipe their feet to remove any salt that's trapped between the paw pads.

5. PROVIDE EXERCISE IN ALL WEATHERS, BUT MODIFY IT BASED ON TEMPERATURE

Whatever the weather, it's important to **practise regular exercise to reduce stress, provide stimulation and prevent obesity**. Even in extreme heat, you can still take your dog for walks early in the morning and later in the evening. If it's too cold outside, you can use toys and create games indoors to stimulate your pet's mind.

6. PREPARE FOR VET VISITS

Teach your pets to go into their carriers and get them used to travel by car before you take them to the vet. Some dogs are natural travellers, while others need time to get used to car rides. Start small and give your dog lots of praise. Cats should never ride on a car outside their carrier.

Key Learning from this guide

Extreme weathers and unusual weather events can frighten our pets, expose them to health problems and, most importantly, disrupt the routines they need for a happy life. **We need to take their needs into consideration in all conditions**, and pay particular attention when the weather starts fluctuating wildly.

TAKE THE NEXT STEPS

TAKE YOUR PET FOR A CHECK-UP.

The more information we can get about the weather, and its impact on our pet, the better. So, make an appointment with your vet – they will provide advice that's tailored to your pet's age, breed and personality.

FURTHER READINGS

Diseases

What You Need To Know About Fleas, Ticks And The Other Parasites That Can Harm Your Pet When You Travel

Parasites

How Do External Parasites Threaten Our Pet's Health?

One Health

What Are The Diseases That Threaten Both Owners And Their Pets?