

# Firecracker Phobia

By Amy Snow & Nancy Zidonis

**A shocking, loud BANG and flashing LIGHT! That's enough to scare any dog, cat, horse, deer, fox, coyote, bird, squirrel, rabbit, and your neighbor with PTSD.**

Fireworks seem like fun for some but they are painful and terrifying for lots of animals and humans. Frightened animals run helter-skelter to get away from this unknown source of blasting noise. These animals can injure themselves, get hit by cars, and cause car accidents. Shelters fill up with lost pets. Wildlife suffer, too. Fear drives them to abandon their young, birds are injured, and bird migration patterns are disrupted. Plus, fireworks pollute the air, soil, and water.

For hundreds of years, fireworks have been a popular way to celebrate events depending on the country and culture. In the United States the Fourth of July and New Years celebrations are marked by fireworks. Attempts to reduce the impact of fireworks have been made because of fire danger and not because of their effect on animals. The odds are this is not going to change anytime soon.

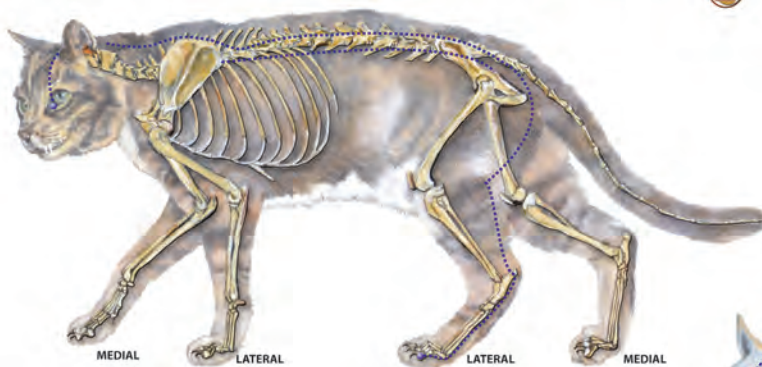
One way to mitigate the effects of fireworks on our own animals is to provide a relatively quiet, safe place and offer them soothing, calming acupressure-massage. There are specific acupressure points and techniques known to reduce fear and help animals settle comfortably.

## Acupressure-Massage Calming Session

Begin by gently tracing the Bladder meridian shown below. Rest one hand on your dog or cat's body and with your other flat hand slowly go down you animal's neck about one (1) below the midline, then over his scapula and back toward the tail. Repeat this three times on each side.

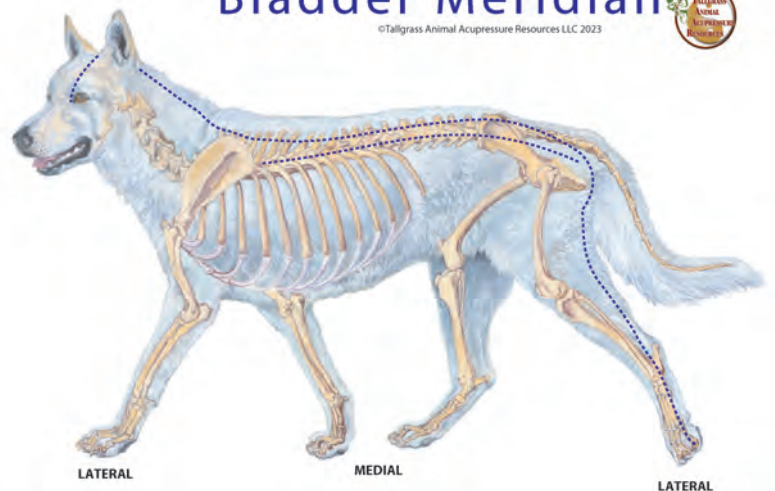
## FELINE ACUPRESSURE MERIDIAN CHART

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## Bladder Meridian

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Next, with one hand still comfortably on the animal, glide your other hand down his leg and place the soft tip of your thumb on the webbing of his dew claw and hold counting slowly to 20. If there's no dew claw, just place your thumb on the scar and hold counting to 20. This acupoint is Large Intestine 4 (LI 4) often used to relieve tension. Repeat on the opposite foreleg.

### Feline and Canine Location of LI 4



The *Yin-Tang* acupoint is just above the eyes in the “3rd Eye” position. Again, place one hand comfortably on the dog or cat while your other thumb or forefinger rubs up and down on the *Yin-Tang* point. This is a Classic Point known to relax animals and reduce anxiety.



To complete this acupressure-massage session, repeat tracing the Bladder meridian just as you did when you started the session. Repeat tracing three times on both sides.

If you're calm and relaxed while performing this session, your dog or cat will most likely follow your example. Breathing slowly and evenly indicates to your animal that you are not afraid while the loud blasts are going on.

This simple acupressure-massage session helps you help your dog or cat live through a traumatic event. This is a way to express your love and care for your animal.