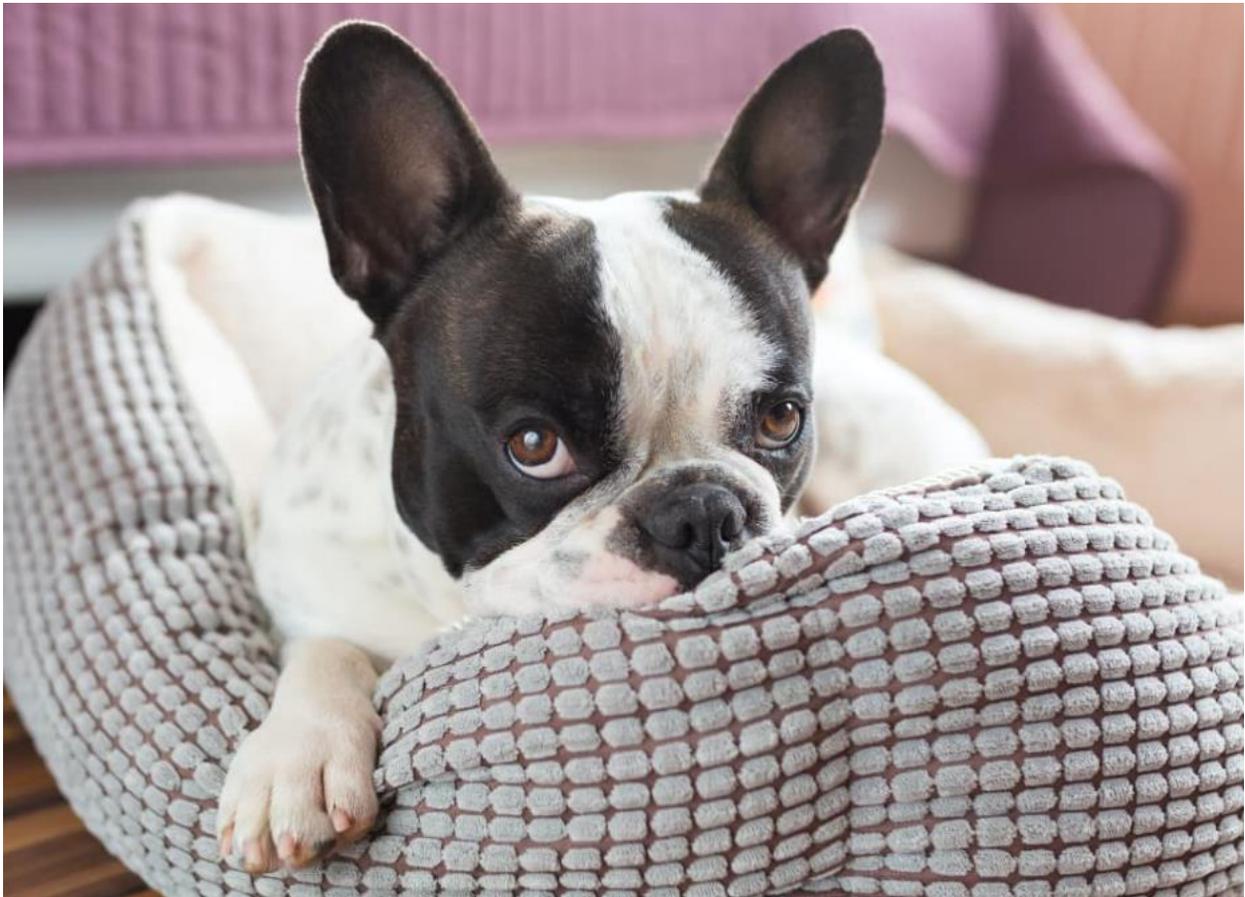


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Calming Dog Beds: Do They Work?

By Lavanya Sunkara

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Relieving anxiety in dogs is a long process. It's a puzzle which needs patience and a combination of positive training and the right tools—including calming dog beds.

But how are calming dog beds different from other dog beds? And do they actually work to help our pups calm down?

Below is a detailed guide to finding the right calming pet bed to help relieve anxiety and stress in your loyal companion.

What Are Calming Dog Beds?



Calming dog beds are specifically designed to alleviate stress in our furry friends and they have the most benefit when used in combination with training (and medication or [calming supplements](#) if necessary).

“A calming bed would be useful for pets with very mild separation anxiety that show minimal signs intermittently,” says Dr. Jennifer Frione of the [Lakeside Animal Hospital](#) in Plantation, Florida.

These comfortable beds facilitate relief from stressful situations by providing dogs with a sense of security—similar to that of a weighted vest.

These anti-anxiety beds aren't new to the dog product market, says Penny Shelly, a team member at the [Muttropolis](#), a pet store in Solana Beach, California. Calming beds

come in different shapes, styles, colors and materials to cater to pets of all ages and sizes. These sleep sanctuaries have a variety of helpful features such as orthopedic padding, bolstered edges, hiding places for burrowing, and self-heating properties.

Shelly explains that dogs who display hiding behavior, burrowing, whining or shivering when not being held, panting due to nerves, and/or excessive jumping may benefit from a special bed.

But Frione explains that a calming dog bed isn't a one-stop-solution to get rid of anxiety in our canine companions and says they are best used in conjunction with behavioral modification training and/or medication. "Canine anxiety, unfortunately, does not have one easy fix," she says. "It is complex and takes time, patience, and consistency to help your fur-baby overcome it."

How Do Calming Beds for Dogs Work?

Anxiety relieving beds for dogs are designed to provide pups with comfort and a sense of security.

As previously mentioned, some calming beds are orthopedic to help relieve joint pain and others also offer self-heating capabilities.

But, the majority of calming dog beds have raised edges or create a cozy experience for borrowing. "Raised rims and cave-like structures make your pup feel protected, calming their overloaded sensory behaviors," says Shelly. Raised rims also have other health benefits. "Raised rims support the neck and spine during sleep, helping to reduce muscle and joint pain."

Types of Calming Dog Beds

Here is a breakdown of different types of calming dog beds:

Orthopedic Dog Beds: [Orthopedic memory foam beds](#) relieve pressure on sore joints, especially for senior dogs who may be suffering from arthritis or muscle issues, giving them a comfortable place to rest. [Pain can cause anxiety in dogs](#), so finding a bed that helps relieve pain can help a dog relax.

Self-Warming Dog Beds: No matter how bad your day is, the warmth from a fireplace can instantly calm you. Similarly, the warmth generated by a self-warming bed can provide your dog with an inviting environment to relax and dream of squirrels.

Shelly states that these beds are ideal for naturally heat-seeking dogs who get stressed when they are cold.



Donut-Style Dog Beds: Small breeds and cats seem to love [these donut-style beds](#) with cozy material that envelopes them gently when curled up, taking them back to a time when they snuggled up next to their mom and littermates. The bed's raised circle provides a headrest in all directions.

Bolster Dog Beds: Beds [bolstered with raised edges](#) on three sides allow dogs to lean against a soft surface and rest their heads, making them feel safer and more protected. These beds are ideal for large dogs. Shelly states these are great for dogs who “feel safer curled up or leaning against something while they sleep.”

Cave-Style Dog Beds: We've all been there, huddled under a thick blanket, to find solace in stressful situations. So, why not give your dog the same opportunity with [a cave-style bed](#) that provides a pocket for him to burrow into? These beds are popular in households with small dogs, but they are just as reassuring for large breeds suffering from anxiety.

“Some are like sleeping bags or have a cover; others pop up like a tent,” says Shelly. “The inside is made of cuddly fabrics such as Sherpa, the outside is a more durable fabric.”

What to Look for in a Calming Dog Bed

When shopping for a calming bed for dogs, pet parents have a few essential things to keep in mind. Below is a helpful checklist to keep in mind when purchasing a dog bed.

Odor Resistant: Look for anti-bacterial faux fur bed covers as they help with resisting odors. Faux fur also provides dogs with a material akin to a mother's fuzzy coat, facilitating a more calming experience.

Machine Washable: Shelly recommends a bed that has a cuddly, machine-washable fabric on the inside. If a bed's inside can't be machine washed, supplement the bed with a matching blanket in an attractive fabric, without sacrificing style.

Waterproof Lining: For elderly dogs, invest in a bed with a waterproof lining so clean up after any accidents is easier, giving your senior dog a comfortable and dry place to rest.

Non-Slip: Make sure the bottom of the bed doesn't slide. There's no need to add more ways for your dog to be stressed out.

Right Size: "Make sure you get a large enough size for your dog to circle around inside, but not too large that it loses its cocooning effect," says Shelly. For the flat, orthopedic styles, the bed has to be large enough for the dog to stretch out fully without hanging over the edges.

Does Your Dog Need a Calming Bed?

If your pet is prone to feeling anxious when you are not home or when encountering loud noises, there's a good chance he might benefit from the comfort of a calming bed—in addition to proper training and other calming products.

Keep in mind that even though a calming dog bed is designed to reduce anxiety, it will not be a solution for the problem by itself. "If your pet is showing the signs of separation anxiety, a calming bed may not be of assistance alone but if used in combination with behavioral modification training and/or medications," Frione states,

To calm your dog for bed, promote relaxation by using gentle strokes down the side of his face or body, stroking his chest in a circular motion, and massaging his ears.

With the right bed and other measures, you can rest assured that your four-legged friend is on his way to living a better, more relaxed life.

