

Crate Training



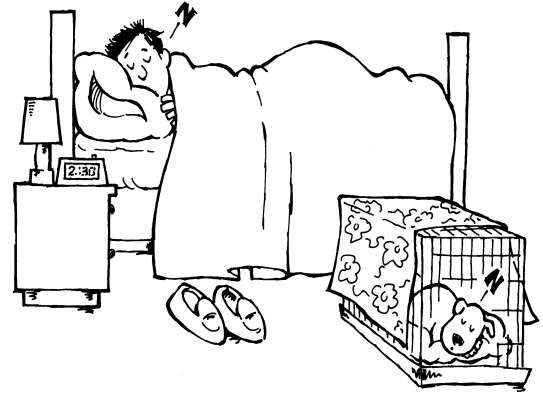
One of the best ways to make a better home environment for your dog is to provide him a house of his own—a portable dog crate. Some people call it a kennel. It's a small box made in a variety of sizes and materials with one or two doors. The dog can be placed in the crate, near a family member, at times when you are too busy to supervise or if you have to step out for a few minutes.

So long as the crate is introduced and used properly, your dog will enjoy the security and privacy of his very own "den".

NEVER use the crate as punishment!!

A crate may help with houstraining

It's possible that your dog might urinate or defecate in the crate once or twice. This is part of the learning process for some dogs and some soon realize it is not pleasant to be in the same area as the mess. Most dogs, however, catch on to this concept without ever soiling their crates. Keep your dog's schedule in mind and never use the crate as a substitute for taking your dog outdoors at regular intervals.



When he's not in the crate

When your puppy is not in the crate, it may be helpful to cut down on the amount of territory you have to watch by closing doors or use baby gates to block off areas out of your sight.

Size of crate

When investing in a crate, you should purchase one that is just large enough for your dog to lie down, turn around, and sit comfortably in. If it's too large, it will allow your dog a sleeping area and a toilet area.

Types of crates

Wire crates provide the best visibility for both people in and dogs looking out. A good quality wire crate is heavier than plastic or nylon, but they are collapsible and come with carry handles. Wire crates have maximum ventilation. Some brands come with two doors, which can be very helpful when teaching a dog that is hesitant about going in the crate to love his new den. To make this type of crate more den-like, you can put a sheet over it.

Plastic airline crates are sturdier, provide more privacy for the dog, and cut down on drafts. Plastic crates are more effective than wire crates at keeping moisture, dirt, and hair out of your car, but they heat up more quickly compared to a wire crate.

Nylon zippered crates are very lightweight and totally collapsible. Dogs can see out through the material. They are an aid to supervision around the house, but dogs have been known to force zippers open or chew through the mesh. There could be a safety risk if a dog is left unsupervised.

Crash-tested crates for the car are expensive but stand out in safety. Only one brand, the MIM VarioCage (made in Sweden), is currently available in North America, from <https://4x4northamerica.com/>.

Developed from "The Toolbox for building a Great Family Dog" © 2011 Terry Ryan & Lisbeth Plant 7-12, 12-13, 08-21, 02-22.

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This information is not a complete program, but only supplemental to class work or a consultation.

Go to: <https://cowichan canine.ca> or call 250-929-1400

Getting your dog happy about his crate

Dogs like enclosed places: Under your desk, under the coffee table, etc. So long as your dog has not had any bad experiences with crates, it will therefore usually be quite easy for your dog to learn to be happy in his crate. Your job is to ensure that your dog learns to associate being in the crate with pleasant experiences. The crate should be used for pleasant confinement, not for isolation or punishment.

You should introduce your dog to his new crate systematically. Set it up on the fringe of a high traffic area of your home. For the first week, keep the crate doors closed. Practice once or twice a day with your dog: with the doors closed, drop a dozen high-value treats into the crate while your dog is looking. Then open the crate doors (prop or tie them so they can't accidentally close), then step away from the crate and let your dog eat as many or as few of the treats as he wishes. After a week of this game, start leaving the crate doors open all the time, and prop tie the door open (with some crates you can remove the door—with plastic crates you can take the top and the door off). Occasionally throughout the day, when your dog is not looking, toss a couple of especially yummy treats into the crate. If all goes well, your dog should start going to the crate on his own for rest and relaxation.

Once your dog seems to be getting used to the open crate, move on to having him in the crate with the door closed. One way to do this is to place his food bowl in his crate at meal time. If he seems worried, place it in front of the crate for the first few meals. Repeat a few times before you close the door.

When your dog is comfortable being in the crate with the door closed, try leaving him alone the amount of time it takes him to eat his dinner. One technique is to go into the bathroom to hide out for that waiting period. Closing the bathroom door behind you isn't as distressing to most dogs as going out the front door. If he begins to whine or barks, go back and practice for another week without leaving him, then try again.

How long in the crate?

Short times in the crate should be interspersed with supervised time outside of the crate. The younger the dog, the more often he needs to eliminate. Here are some approximate time limit guidelines—for crating your dog by age:

8-10 weeks	30 - 60 minutes, longer overnight
11-13 weeks	1- 2 1/2 hours, longer overnight
14-17 weeks	2 ½ - 4 hours, longer overnight
18 + weeks	5 - 6 hours daytime, longer overnight

Crates for automobile travel

It's distracting for the driver and dangerous for the dog to ride loose in an automobile. The crate should be attached to the hull of the vehicle with straps. If there should be an accident, a loose crate flying around the car is, of course, a bad thing. Seriously consider purchasing a crash-tested crate for safety (see p.1).

Most dogs like to see where they're going. Try to position the crate so it can be high enough to offer a view. Two exceptions: The dog who gets carsick and the dog who likes to "chase" the scenery as it goes by. These dogs might be more comfortable and/or manageable when the crate is positioned down low or with a towel or blanket thrown over it. Ask your instructor about the Calming Cap for dogs that are worried about people or dogs passing by outside the car.

HOT WEATHER WARNING

The combination of hot weather and dogs left inside a car can be serious, even fatal. Plan ahead: know what stops you will need to make. Consider leaving your dog home on hot days—don't depend on finding a shady parking place. Someone might have beaten you to it. A dog's normal body temperature is 38.3 to 39.2 degrees Celsius (101.0 to 102.5 Fahrenheit). Dogs do not tolerate a rise in temperature well. On a warm day, the inside of a car heats up very quickly, even when left in the shade. Dark colored cars are especially heat absorbing. On a 25-degree day (77 F), the temperature inside a car parked in the shade is 32.2 degrees (90 F). It can reach over 70 degrees Celsius (160 F) in minutes if in direct sunlight. Either scenario can be fatal to the dog, as dogs do not tolerate heat near as well as humans do.