



# Why You Should Crate Train Your Dog

When your puppy is unsupervised, whether indoors or outdoors, it is important to have somewhere safe in which to place him. Unattended puppies learn bad habits quickly and can cause damage to household items easily. Injuries and even death can befall an unsupervised puppy in the blink of an eye. Puppies die from chewing on electrical cords, suffocate in plastic bags, drown in pools or ponds, get caught up in curtain cords and strangle to death. Keeping your puppy safe from harm is one of your responsibilities as a pet owner. Unless you can supervise your puppy 100% of the time, you need to crate train him.

Many people have preconceived ideas about crates, viewing them as cages or puppy jails. Nothing could be further from the truth. Crate training is an effective way to keep both your puppy and your possessions safe from harm. When properly introduced puppies, come to love their crate and view it as a safe haven and a place to go to rest.



## Crate training is absolutely mandatory if:

- 1. Children reside in the same house as the puppy or visit regularly**

Puppies and children need their own space away from one another. If you have a crate trained puppy you can teach your children that the puppy must not be disturbed when he's in his crate. You will avoid dog bites if your puppy has somewhere he can go to get away from pestering children.
- 2. You have another dog or other dogs visit regularly**

Puppies are very exhausting to older dogs who often need time out. Placing your puppy in his crate for a sleep will provide your older dog with some peace and some all important solitude. Also, some dogs can intimidate, bully or frighten little puppies by coming on way too strong.. If your puppy has somewhere to go to when he's afraid, the experience is likely to be less traumatic.
- 3. You intend to participate in dogs sports or obedience**

Dogs that participate in dog sports and obedience often need to spend 3-4 hours in their crates at sporting events. It is absolutely exhausting to have a dog on the end of a lead at a dog sporting event for this amount of time. Most dogs that participate in these events are crate trained.



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## 4. You intend to travel with your dog

When dogs travel, they do so in crates. Even on long car trips it is much more comfortable for your dog to be inside a crate than on a seat belt which restricts movement. Of course, your dog should never be loose in the car, in a car accident he will become a projectile, potentially seriously injuring other passengers.

## 5. Your dog will regularly visit grooming salons

When visiting grooming salons dogs are kept in crates – end of story. If your dog is not already crate trained this could cause great stress and may make him whine or bark all day. Apart from the obvious effects of this on your dog, consider the groomers who are subjected to the protests of your dog for hours on end.

## 6. You want your puppy to feel at home during stays at the vet

If your dog requires a stay at the vet clinic, chances are he is unwell. The stress of being unwell, coupled with the stress of not being accustomed to crate confinement will cause your dog distress. If he's already crate trained he can concentrate on getting well.

## Benefits of Crate Training

- 🐾 You can cook a meal, take a shower or answer the phone without having to worry about what your puppy is getting into.
- 🐾 Crates teach puppies how to 'self settle' and calm themselves down, a skill they're not born with.
- 🐾 By teaching your puppy to settle and chew a Kong or Bone in their crate they learn appropriate chew toy habits rather than learning to indiscriminately chew everything and anything.
- 🐾 Your puppy can sleep in the bedroom with you if he's in a crate. You won't have to lock him away in a laundry or bathroom. Your puppy will feel secure knowing you are in the room with him. Remember that before you bought him home, he was sleeping with his littermates and sleeping alone may be scary to him.
- 🐾 Puppies like small spaces when they're anxious or scared. Your puppy will feel more secure in his crate if he's worried about anything.
- 🐾 Your puppy needs time out from you too. Humans demand a lot from puppies and they need solitude also.



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- 🐾 Puppies get over-tired just like human children. When your puppy is over-tired you can put him into his crate for an enforced sleep.
- 🐾 You can duck out to the hairdressers, shops or visit a friend for a coffee knowing that your puppy and your home will come to no harm.
- 🐾 Crates are great for assisting with housetraining. Puppies will not eliminate where they sleep unless they are forced to.
- 🐾 Crates are excellent for car travel. They keep your puppy safe and secure in the car.

## Common Objections to Crate Training

### But they're so expensive

Agreed, but take a moment to consider how much your lounge suite, your carpet, your irrigation system etc cost you. Puppies destroy these and many other items in the blink of an eye.

### But he won't go into the crate

This is where training comes in. Teach your puppy that the crate is a happy place, feed him his meals inside. Leave treasures inside for him to find.

### But he cries when I put him into the crate

Wait him out. Attending to him when he's crying, whining or barking will only teach him to be unsettled in the crate. Wait for a period of quiet and then let him out.

### I just don't like the idea of it, it looks like a jail

That's the way humans view crates. When properly introduced dogs adore their crates. After all, it's just an indoor kennel. Remember, dogs are denning animals; they enjoy the feeling of security that enclosed spaces give them.

## What Size Crate?

A crate needs to be large enough for your puppy to stand up, turn around and lie down. If a crate is too big your puppy may sleep up one end and toilet at the other end.

If you have a breed that will grow much larger as it ages you have three choices:

1. Buy a crate suitably sized for your puppy while he is young, then as he grows and is toilet-trained buy another crate that accommodate his adult size.
2. Buy a crate that will accommodate your dog's adult size and block up one end with pillows, cushions, an esky etc. As your puppy grows you can give him more room.



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3. You can purchase a crate with a divider that will expand with your puppy.

## What Type of Crate?

Crates come in three main types:

1. Plastic moulded (Airline Approved)
2. Powder Coated Metal
3. Soft Sided

You would be wise NOT to buy a soft sided crate for a puppy. When they begin teething at around 13-14 weeks they will chew it to pieces! Stick to either the plastic moulded or powder coated metal crates.

When using a powder coated metal crate it is often wise to place a blanket over the crate to help the puppy feel more secure and less exposed when in his crate.

## How Long Can A Puppy Spend In a Crate?

Generally, you can place a puppy in a crate for around 2 hours through the day and/or overnight. You will need to set your alarm to take your puppy out every 3-4 hours for toileting overnight.

If you work, you will need a long-term confinement area such as a bathroom, laundry, playpen, sideway etc where you can place your puppy in addition to the crate. His crate should be placed in the long-term confinement area.

## Where to Buy a Crate

You can buy crates from the following places:

- 🐾 Pet Stores
- 🐾 Trading Post
- 🐾 EBay
- 🐾 Internet Stores

## A Final Word

Every dog trainer I know has a crate trained dog. If that's what we do and we have well behaved, happy dogs then why on Earth would you do anything different?



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