

Crate Training

Crate training is a fairly recent management technique to deal with house training, home destruction and puppy hyper-activity. It is also useful to transport your pet to other places in a safe way. Teaching your dog to love the crate is really easy to do with positive techniques.

But, isn't it cruel to keep your hound confined for so long? That is the question every dog owner has, and it is a very important one. It is great to use a dog crate to help your dog settle down, learn what is properly chewing material and to potty train him.

Done properly, your dog will enjoy its time on the crate because it will become its den, its safe place of rest. However, you must understand that your dog can only stay in the crate for a few hours at a time. The crate must not be used for permanent confinement while you are out working all day long and all night while you sleep. Long confinement periods will turn a perfectly good management tool into an inhumane treatment of your beloved furry friend.

Use the crate wisely, follow the puppy crate training schedule below and your dog will adore it while he learns what he needs to learn.

Find the Best Dog Crate

Before starting on a puppy crate training schedule, you need to get the right crate. With hundreds of them available, it can be a daunting task. Follow the tips below to find the right one for you and your pet.

What size should a dog crate be?

The crate should be big enough for your dog to fit standing and be able to turn around. Nothing more. If bigger, your dog could start using part of it as a toilet - a big no-no. If you have a puppy that will grow and do not want to buy two crates, cover part of the bigger crate with a box to prevent the puppy from using the extra-space for potty.

Measure your dog standing up from hears to toes (height) and nose to tail (length), add a couple of inches to each measurement and buy the size crate closer to those measurements!

What is the best dog crate material?

The answer to that questions depends on what do you want your crate for, and your dog's size and destructive power.

- **Fabric dog crates** are lightweight and very easy to fold, making them an excellent choice for travel. Your dog must be fully crate trained and still be supervised at all times because a dog could break out of it very easily. If you are

going camping, to a doggy event or on a trip, this is a great choice. However, I do not recommend crates made out of fabric for potty-training and daily unsupervised confinement.



[EliteField 3-Door Folding Soft Dog Crate, Indoor & Outdoor Pet Home, Multiple Sizes and Colors Available \(36"L x 24"W x 28"H, Navy Blue\)](#)

One of the best travel crates in the market, the EliteField can be folded for transport and has 3 doors which can be useful for training dog sports.

- **Wire dog crates** are a very popular choice because they can be very secure, most can be folded for storage or travel and they tend to be cheaper than plastic ones. You can also find non-collapsible wire crates that are sturdier and prevent clever dogs from escaping.



[Folding Metal Dog Crate | Divider Panel, Leak-Proof Dog Tray](#)

One of the most popular crates to potty train your dog. This crate can be folded for transportation. The divider is important to make the crate smaller then bigger as your puppy grows.



[MidWest Foldable Metal Exercise Pen](#)

A play pen is also a popular option to keep your puppy confined to a smaller area. Keep in mind that if the area is too big, he may go potty inside!

- **Plastic dog crates** are favored because they are very strong and tough, they also block more of the view, creating a safe and secure area for your dog. Plastic dog crates are also good for your pet when traveling on an airplane.



[Petmate Kennel Heavy-Duty Dog Travel Crate No-Tool Assembly](#)

Petmate is a good brand, the dog crates are very sturdy and durable. They are not easy to transport because it's a two part crate but if your dog chews on everything, this is a good option.

- **Decorative dog crates** are available to match your furniture and create an aesthetic home environment. They are more expensive, but worth the money if you are thinking your dog will be using his crate long-term.



Indoor Dog Crate End Table

Decorative crates are more expensive but look great in your home! It's important to teach your puppy to love this place so he will also use it to rest in the future.

Steps to Puppy Crate Training the Positive Way!

Found the perfect crate? Great! It is time to make your hound love it before you can start on the puppy crate training schedule. To do this, place the crate in a comfortable place for you and your dog. Open the door of the crate and toss a treat inside. Keep the door open and let your pooch explore it. Do this several times until your pet goes in and out easily and without hesitation after a treat. Then, it is time to start training the commands "Go in" and "Out".

Dog crate training step 1: Teach the commands

Say "Go in!" (you can even point with your hand) and toss a treat inside the crate. As soon as your dog goes inside the crate, praise him with your [marker word](#) and toss another treat for him. Immediately afterwards say "Out" and toss a treat outside the crate, when your pooch goes outside praise and reward again. Repeat several times until your canine friends "gets it". You will know this because he will start going in and out more easily and without hesitation.

For this first step in dog crate training use super yummy treats! Your dog has to really enjoy this exercises. Also, make short and fun sessions, don't let your puppy get bored and wonder away.

Dog crate training step 2: Test the commands

After many repetitions, start delaying tossing a treat inside the crate after the command "Go in". The idea is to give the dog a chance to respond to the command without following a treat. Say "Go in!" and wait for your dog to go inside, as soon as he does praise and reward!

The first few times I would wait up to 10 seconds, if your dog doesn't go in, then practice a few more times letting him follow the treat inside the crate. Do the same for "Out".

You may have noticed that we haven't closed the gate up until this point. It is very important to help your hound love his den before closing the door. The training technique above helps your dog associate the crate with good things happening, which makes the crate a good thing in itself.

Dog crate training step 3: Start closing the door

Say "Go in" and as soon as your dog goes in, praise and reward with a treat. Immediately afterwards close the door for 1 second, open it and say "Out!". Praise your dog for going out (no more treats for this skill, going out is the reward). Repeat several times, until your dog is comfortable with you closing the door.

Dog crate training step 4: Slowly extend the time the door is closed

Repeat step 3 but slowly increasing the time the door is closed. The first few minutes will be the most challenging, you must go as slowly as necessary to [prevent whining](#). Once your pooch can do 5 minutes without you in sight...you can jump to 15 min, then 30, then 1 hour, then 2 hours. When you start leaving your hound inside the crate for 30 min or more, leave a stuffed Kong and/or chew toys for him to enjoy his time in the crate. As soon as you open the door and ask him to go out, take the Kong and toys away. ***This is very important for your dog to understand that those special toys are only available when he is confined inside the crate.***

Done! Now you have a dog that can go in and out of the crate on command and best of all...loves to be inside it! If you have a young puppy, these step shouldn't take you more than a few days. In fact, you can probably do it on a weekend. [For older](#) or shy dogs, it might take a little longer.

Now it's time to use the crate to prevent potty training accidents and teach your dog to chew only on his [toys](#) with the puppy crate training schedule.

Puppy Crate Training Schedule

Puppies do very well when you set up a routine because they learn to anticipate what is coming, which helps them reduce their anxiety. It's the same with us, humans. We feel better when we know what is coming next. A puppy crate training schedule is a great thing because it gives you a specific pattern of actions to follow every day. Done correctly you can have a potty-trained dog in just about a week.

The following chart will help you remember how long puppies can hold their bladders depending on their age. You can't expect a three-month-old puppy to stay inside his crate for 4 hours without any accidents! Also, keep in mind that pups will potty after eating, after a play session and after a nap. Keep this in mind when working on your puppy's crate training schedule.

STEP	WHAT TO DO	FOR HOW LONG
1.	Wake up and immediately take puppy out to potty.	15 minutes (don't play, just wait for puppy to pee)
2.	Stay outside and play with puppy or let him explore	15 – 30 minutes
3.	Time to eat! Food plus Water & digestive time (in crate or supervised)	30 minutes (use interactive toy, not food bowl)
4.	Take puppy outside to potty.	15 minutes (don't play, just wait for puppy to pee)
5.	Outside or inside play with puppy (Tug, fetch, chase, etc.)	10 – 20 minutes
6.	Back to crate for rest or chew time	1-2 hours (provide chew toy, stuffed Kong, etc.)

You will notice that a puppy crate training schedule has certain key parameters. Play time for 15-20 minutes, feeding time for 30 minutes and crate time for 1-2 hours. Follow the schedule as it is but use your human instincts too. If you think your puppy needs to play longer, do it. If you think your puppy wants to go potty, take him outside immediately.