

## *Tips & tools for setting up your pup*



Today, I want to talk about a very useful tool when it comes to crate training your new puppy. Even more important, I want to discuss how to set yourself up for effectively crate training a new puppy.

To some people, a crate looks a bit like jail cell. However, most puppies and dogs (once they're used to it) don't see it that way at all. In fact, they typically come to see their crate as a "doggy bedroom" or a den. It becomes a safe place...a place your puppy will learn to love.

If you think about it, canines have evolved from being outside animals where they would have to make little caves and dens to live in and feel safe. **So, really having a crate is a very important part of making your dog feel comfortable, calm, and at home.** And to make a create even more den-like for your pup, you can even put a blanket on top of the crate, which makes it a much warmer, safer place for your puppy.

If you haven't caught on by now, I'm a big fan of the crate...

**How to Create a Positive Association with Your Puppy's Crate:** Now, **the most important thing is getting your puppy to love his crate.** This is all done through basic association, no rocket science here.

Think of all the things that your puppy loves to do like eating and playing with toys. These are the things you'll want to have your puppy do inside that crate as much as you can. For instance, you can feed your puppy every single meal inside that crate, and it won't take long before he's running and jumping in there as fast as he can. You can also give him his treats inside the crate. It's also a great idea to give your puppy little chew toys that he loves inside the crate. These chew toys will give your puppy an opportunity to spend long periods of time inside his crate on his own will.

And, of course, you should certainly make the puppy's crate a warm, comfortable place with lots of lovely blankets or whatever it is that your puppy needs. **As long as your crate is in a safe place, and is placed in a space that is not too breezy, too cold, or too hot, it won't be long before the crate becomes your puppy's favorite spot in the house.**

**Important:** In order to keep the crate a happy place for your pup, it's vital that you don't establish a negative association by getting frustrated or annoyed with your puppy in his crate.



**How to Keep Your Puppy Calm in a Crate:** Once you've made a positive association between your puppy and his crate, you can start working on ensuring your puppy stays calm and happy once placed in his little den.

One way to set your puppy up to win is making sure that you put him in the crate after he's been fully exercised. **If you're putting your puppy in the crate when he is full of energy, chances are he's going to be getting restless and possibly start whining to come out.** However, if you exercise him and he's been fed and watered, he'll be ready for sleep and will remain calm.



**When to Let Your Puppy out of the Crate:** The next important thing to know is when to let your puppy out of his cage.

The key thing is that you want your puppy to be calm before you let him out. If your puppy starts whining and you let him out, it doesn't take long before the puppy catches on and goes, "Okay, that's how I get out of my crate." **Puppies are super smart little devils!**

For this reason, you have to be very careful about letting your puppy out when he's whining. One of the biggest reasons to use a crate is that you don't want your puppy to use the bathroom inside the house. And one reason your puppy might whine to be let out is because he has to go to the bathroom. To avoid this problem, always take your puppy outside to go to the bathroom before you put him in his crate. Problem solved!

Other than needing to go to the bathroom, a puppy will often whine because he simply just wants out of his crate.

Don't fall for this...even if your puppy has been in his cage for a while. Always wait until he is calm to remove him. This might mean you need to sit by his crate for 30 seconds or a minute until he stops whining. The minute he stops, let him out. If he continues to carry on, leave him.

**One little tip:** If you find that your puppy is crying and won't stop, one technique that you can use is to sit quietly and calmly with your puppy with your back turned to him. The reason you do this is, if you look at him and speak to him, you're giving your puppy eye contact and communicating, which will get him excited. This will often make him more whiny or barky.

If you sit there very calmly, you're giving him the message, "I'm here. I'm calm. You're safe. You don't need to worry about anything." Because your energy is so calm and low, the puppy will tend to mirror your energy and become calm and quiet, too. Then you open the crate door.

As you continue working with your pup, you'll want to increase the amount of time your puppy must be quiet before the crate door opens. This takes time and patience, but as long as you commit to this method, your puppy will learn the rules for being let out of his crate.

**How Crates Help with Puppy Potty Training:** One of the biggest reasons I like using a crate is that a crate can be very helpful in potty training. It sets boundaries and allows you to control your puppy and keep him in the area that you want him so he's not all over the place all the time. Here's what's important to know about potty training with a crate... When your puppy has been confined in his crate, his bowels are kind of stationary. This is good...it reduces your pup's need to use the bathroom—the exact reason you have him in the crate.

However, once his little legs start pumping and running around, it's likely that he's going to need to go potty. For this reason, it's important to take your puppy outside to go potty every time you remove him from his cage. Eventually, **your puppy will catch on to the idea that he's only supposed to use the bathroom outside.**



**Where to Set Up Your Puppy's Crate:** Once you get a crate, you might wonder, "Where is the best place to set it up?" That's a great question! Typically, I recommend that you set up your puppy's crate in your main living area. This will make it easy for you to keep an eye on your puppy and take him outside when he needs to go potty. I also think it's a good idea to bring your puppy's crate into your bedroom at bedtime. This will ensure your puppy feels safe and secure at nighttime.

As your puppy gets older, you can always move that crate inch by inch until it's outside your bedroom. **Once your puppy is more familiar with the house and more familiar with the noises in his new surroundings, he'll feel more happy and relaxed.**

**Tip:** It's not a bad idea to invest in two crates...one for your living space and one for your bedroom. Doing this will alleviate the hassle of constantly moving crates.

**How to Manage Separation Anxiety While Your Puppy is Crated:** It's important to start slowly when leaving your puppy alone for the first time.

Start by leaving your puppy alone in his cage for maybe 20 or 30 seconds, then come back in. It's important to simply ignore your puppy and go do something, like make a cup of tea.

Eventually, your puppy will start realizing that you come and go and that it's no big deal. A great time to practice this is when your puppy falls asleep. This is a prime time when you can leave the room for a long time, come back, and then you slowly extend that time that you're leaving your puppy alone in the room.

**Tip:** When you return to the room after being gone, I suggest that you don't immediately open the crate door. Get your puppy in the habit that just because you've come back in the room doesn't mean you open that door for him again.

Hopefully this post has given you some great ideas and tips as to how you can start using the crate as a safe place and training tool for your puppy.

