

CRATE TRAINING YOUR PUPPY

A gentle, positive guide to helping your puppy love their crate

THE GOLDEN RULE

The crate should be a **safe, comfortable place** — never a punishment. Build time gradually and always give your puppy plenty of toilet, exercise and social time outside the crate.

1. Make the crate inviting

Place comfortable bedding inside and add a safe puppy-appropriate chew or toy. Keep the crate somewhere the family spends time so your puppy does not feel isolated. Initially, leave the door open and allow your puppy to investigate at their own pace.

2. Start with tiny steps

Reward your puppy for looking at the crate, approaching it, going inside and settling. Feed some meals near or inside the crate. Once they are relaxed, briefly close the door, then open it again before they become worried.

3. Build up time slowly

Increase crate time in small stages. If your puppy cries, whines or becomes distressed, the session may have progressed too quickly. Wait for a calm moment where possible, then reduce the duration next time. It is normal for puppies to make some noise while learning.

4. Three-week daytime progression

Days 1–3	Door open; treats and meals in crate. Close door for only a few seconds at a time.
Days 4–7	Several short sessions of 1–5 minutes while you sit nearby.
Week 2	Gradually build to 5–15 minutes. Briefly step away, then return calmly.
Week 3	Build towards 15–30 minutes during calm periods, varying the duration.
Ongoing	Increase time according to your puppy's age, ability to settle and toilet control. Never rush simply to reach a target.

5. A simple daytime routine

Toilet outside → a little exercise/play → calm time → crate with a safe chew → rest → toilet outside when they wake. Repeat throughout the day. Puppies should not be expected to stay in a crate for long periods simply because they are quiet.

6. What if my puppy cries?

A little whining can be part of settling and learning. Stay calm and avoid immediately turning crying into attention or play. However, persistent or escalating distress is a sign to slow down. Check that your puppy does not need the toilet, is not too hot/cold, frightened or uncomfortable. Never leave a genuinely distressed puppy to 'cry it out'.

7. Night-time crate training

Take your puppy outside immediately before bed. Young puppies may need one or more overnight toilet trips. Keep night trips quiet and boring: toilet, praise softly, then straight back to bed. As bladder control develops, overnight trips can gradually reduce.

8. Important safety rules

- Remove collars, harnesses and anything that could catch or snag when your puppy is unsupervised in the crate.
- Use a correctly sized crate: enough room to stand, turn around, lie down and stretch comfortably.
- Never use the crate as punishment.
- Make sure your puppy gets regular toilet breaks, exercise, training and companionship.
- If your puppy repeatedly panics in the crate, seek advice from a qualified reward-based trainer or veterinary

professional.

CALM • GRADUAL • POSITIVE

The goal is not simply to keep your puppy in a crate — it is to teach them that their crate is a safe place where they can relax and sleep.