

Why Use A Dog Crate?

Is it cruel to lock my dog in a crate?

Many people think it is true as they would certainly not want to be locked in a crate for any length of time themselves. This is not the case for dogs who are 'den' animals. Just look at where they want to spend most of their sleep and relaxation time: under the table, tucked in the corner of a room. In the wild, wolves and wild dogs are known to burrow holes to sleep in.

Hopefully you are getting the picture. Basically, dogs like to feel safe and secure when sleeping and have somewhere they can be alone. A dog crate is able to provide this safe haven.

Why use a dog crate anyway?

A crate helps address many of the problems that cause stress and anxiety to pet owners. They serve a useful purpose to prevent (and correct) problems associated with destructive behaviour and fear of certain types of people (strangers, kids, etc.). They help with house training, with visitors who are afraid of dogs and, of course, when travelling with your dog.

Where should I put the dog crate?

The best places for a crate are in the corner of rooms, away from too much heat and cold drafts. Dogs like to be near their family so locate the crate where your dog can see and hear you. It's a good idea for the crate to be the dog's only bed.

What do I look for in a dog crate?

A dog crate is usually a rectangular enclosure constructed of wire, plastic, canvas or even wood. Some people prefer to start out with a wire crate as dogs are less likely to chew them in the early days of crate training.

Size: Whichever type of dog crate you get, they should be large enough to allow your dog to stretch out flat on his side without being cramped and to sit up without hitting his head on the top. Also remember that a dog crate that is too large defeats the purpose of providing security and promoting bowel control.

Materials: Avoid **cheap, thin wire crates**. They are not worth it! They are more prone to collapsing accidents and dogs can easily chew the wires. **Plastic** crates provide more privacy and care must be taken to ensure your dog doesn't get too hot inside. They are also easy to wash and sanitize. **Canvas** (travel) crates are lightweight but are not strong enough to keep some dogs from escaping.

Dividers: If you are purchasing a crate that is large enough for your dog when fully grown, block off part of it initially so that your dog feels snug and secure. Adjustable crate dividers are perfect for this.

Cover: It's also a good idea to have a cover to darken the inside of the dog crate. This helps to settle your dog and make it less likely for him to be disturbed by distractions outside. A blanket makes a good cover and there are vinyl covers that are easy to sanitize which repel insects. Just make sure your dog has plenty of ventilation and is not located in direct sunlight.