

Crate training:

While many people cringe at the thought of placing their new dog or puppy in a "cage," crate training is, in fact, a natural and relatively comfortable experience for the dog. Dogs being den animals, feel safe and secure in small, confined areas. A crate is simply an artificial den. It makes house training much easier and protects your dog and home when you are not able to closely supervise your new companion.

Selecting a crate:

Your dog should be able to stand up, turn around and lie down in the crate. For puppies, it is important that the crate not be big enough to allow the puppy to eliminate in one corner and sleep in another. If you wish to buy a crate that will fit your puppy when full grown, simply block off the back of it with a crate divider or a cinder block/ bricks so you restrict the total floor space available to your puppy.

Wire crates often fold for storage, but they may be heavy.

Plastic kennels may be warmer inside and many are airline-approved. Although lightweight, they are bulky to store.

Training:

Although instinct encourages them to seek out a den, your dog may not immediately fall in love with a new kennel. Introduce it gradually, throwing a treat into the crate and allowing your dog to go in, eat it and come right back out. Praise your dog each time they enter their crate. Feed them in their crate. Don't close the door until your dog seems very comfortable. Then, open it immediately. Gradually increase the length of time the door is closed.

Once your dog is used to the crate, allow them to spend longer periods in it while you stay nearby. Never open the door of the crate while your dog is whining, barking, scratching or doing anything you don't want to encourage. **Do not praise your dog when you let them out.**

Never use the crate for punishment or drag your dog over to it. Never allow children to tease your crated dog, bang on the crate or enter the crate with your dog. This is your dog's private space. Teach children to respect it as such.

With your dog safely kenneled, you can begin routine house training. **Any time you cannot actively supervise your pet, place them in the crate with a toy stuffed with treats or some other fun, safe toy.** Each time you take your dog out of the kennel, take your dog straight outdoors to their potty corner. Some pet parents have found that using a potty cue such as "Go potty" or "Get busy" further helps house train their dog. Keep your dog on their leash and do not play with them until they have done their business. Praise your dog profusely or give treats, then play.