



WHAT'S WRONG WITH CRATING?

- **No, a crate will not help a puppy learn to “hold it.”** Puppies’ bladders are not fully developed until they are 4 to 6 months old, so trying to force them to learn something that they are incapable of learning can backfire.
- **No, crates do not promote a feeling of security.** On the contrary, many dogs who are “crate trained” for long periods develop separation anxiety, depression, hyperactivity, and other types of anti-social behavior.
- **No, he doesn’t “love” his crate.** He loves YOU. And he’ll do anything to please you, including sitting behind bars, waiting patiently for you to free him.
- **No, a crate is not similar to a playpen, crib, or den.** A crate is a cramped, impoverished environment that prevents dogs from engaging in basic normal activities, such as looking out the window, walking around, and stretching out comfortably.

Using an exercise pen, gating off a puppy-proofed room, tethering your puppy to you, making arrangements with a dog walker during the day, putting in a doggie door, going home at lunchtime and not working late, providing interactive toys (such as Kongs), and deciding that your couch isn’t more important than your relationship with your dog are all better options than a crate. But mostly, puppies and dogs just need consistent, attentive, knowledgeable training and care—just as children do—not warehousing in a crate.

No more denial! A crate is nothing more than a convenience device for busy humans—but it’s not good for your dog. No animal on the face of the Earth “loves” being locked inside a cage, including your dog. If you still doubt it, go on—lock yourself inside a crate and see what you think.

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HOUSETRAINING YOUR PUPPY

- **Housetraining a dog takes patience and time (and a good sense of humor helps, too!).** With understanding, a regular schedule of feedings and “bathroom breaks,” and careful attention to the dog’s body language, housetraining a dog can be a snap.
- **Establish a schedule as soon as you get the dog home.** Take the dog outside first thing in the morning, within a half-hour of eating or drinking, immediately after napping or playing, and right before bedtime. Have the dog sleep in your bedroom at night, so you will be alerted if he or she wakes up and needs to go outside. (Puppies, with their small bladders, often can’t make it through the night without having to relieve themselves.)
- **When you take Fido outside, lead him to a designated area.** (It helps to reinforce the behavior if he can smell where he has gone before.) It may help to “get things going” if you take him for a walk and/or play an energetic game of fetch or chase while outside. After he has relieved himself (but not during the process, as this may distract him), give lots of praise and a tasty treat.
- **If Fido isn’t inclined to heed the call of nature by the time you’re ready to go back inside, keep a close eye on him.** If he starts sniffing around, whining, scratching the door, or acting agitated, whisk him back outside right away.
- **Remember that the muscles that control elimination do not develop in puppies until they are 4 to 6 months old.** In some dogs, it takes even longer. If the animal is older and has never been housetrained, was first paper-trained, or is a very small dog, housetraining may take longer.
- **Never strike, yell at, or otherwise reprimand dogs who have “accidents,” as this will only confuse them and make them think that the act of urinating or defecating is bad.** Rubbing Fluffy’s nose in it makes no sense to her whatsoever—she may even think you’re trying to force her to eat her own waste! Punishment will only teach her not to eliminate in front of you, rather than teaching her to communicate her need to go outside—and that will make it harder to keep your house clean. Housetraining works best through prevention (by taking the dog out frequently) coupled with lavish praise for outdoor elimination.
- **Establish a consistent schedule of eating and bathroom trips.** Most dogs will show progress within a matter of days or weeks.

Good luck!