

When you are cage training try to be very low key when the puppy comes out of the cage. It would be a good idea to ensure puppy goes straight outside to relieve himself/herself when leaving the cage. Save praise and excitement for when he/she are inside the cage so that the puppy learns he/she gets a lot of attention, affection and goodies inside the cage but less when outside.

Practise this little and often. If all his/her feeds are given in the cage you will automatically have at least three or four practice sessions per day.

For some puppies, all will vary, it might be a case of accustoming the puppy to short periods of confinement. Stuff some of his/her dinner into a Kong toy, sit this in their bowl with the remainder of their dinner and place it in the cage. When your puppy goes in as usual, close the door and leave him/her while he/she eats his/her dinner and empties the Kong. You can also leave him/her in the cage for short periods by offering a chew or stuffed bone. NOTE: do not give small pieces of rawhide chews as these can swell in the stomach and cause a blockage.

By gradually building up the time he/she spends in the cage it shouldn't take long for him/her to learn that his/her doggy den is THE place to be. From start to finish it should take about a week to cage train your puppy, however all are individuals so don't try and rush things go at your puppy's pace.

Having your puppy in a cage in your bedroom at night can help puppy to settle into its new environment much quicker. A book worth reading 'The Dog's Mind' by Bruce Fogle, in it the writer states that it is best to have puppy with you up to at least 20 weeks



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CAGE TRAINING



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The thought of confining a dog to a cage, especially a puppy, can seem, to new owners, as harsh and unnecessary. However when this is viewed as providing the puppy with a safe and comfortable den that he chooses to line in, the perception changes. If introduced correctly the cage can be one of the most useful pieces of equipment you can purchase. Cages can be used at home when you have to go out or if you have non-doggy children around. They can also be used in the car for safety and security and they can be taken on holiday with you so regardless of where you are the puppy/dog will have his/her regular sleeping area right there too - providing a home from home. With care they can be used to assist with house-training (see House-training information sheet) and when left at home alone (see Home Alone information sheet). Should the worst happen and your puppy/dog have to stay overnight at the vets or is put on restricted exercise i.e. due to injuries, the cage trained dog will not have to go through additional trauma of unfamiliar close confinement and he/she will already view cages as a safe place to be.

Stating some of the virtues and advantages of cage training, there must also be a **WARNING** of the dangers of abusing this useful equipment. Cages should only be used for **SHORT TERM** confinement only. Going out and leaving your puppy/dog alone in a cage for 8 hours every day is totally unacceptable; but leaving him/her for maximum of 2 hours should be fine - once they are used to it and are older **DO NOT DO TO A NEW & YOUNG PUP**

The cage must be large enough to allow the dog to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably. There should also be space for a bowl of water. If buying a cage for a puppy ask your breeder what size would be suitable for an adult dog and buy accordingly. Never buy a cage that fits right now always buy one that will fit the dog for the whole of its life.

Okay, having got your cage what do you do next? How are you going to get your puppy to go in there? What you don't do is shove him in and quickly shut the door to stop him coming out. You must provide comfortable bedding, it should be thick enough to provide warmth and allow the puppy/dog to paw it up to make it more nest like. The next step is to tie open the door, as if it is not tied open it may accidentally close at the wrong time and set your cage training back a few steps.



Finally, you need to make sure you have some tasty titbits on hand (sliced sausages work well) which you use to encourage your pup into the cage and reward him whenever he is there.

Start by calling the pup and throwing a titbit just inside the cage, as he moves in to eat it gently praise him 'clever boy/girl'. Repeat this several times and each time throw a titbit further into the cage until the puppy has to go all the way in to eat it. Start to say 'in your bed' just before the puppy goes into the cage.

Once your puppy is happy with this you can then start delay throwing in the titbit until the puppy has walked into the cage, so you will say:

1. 'In your bed'
2. Wait for the pup to go in (do not repeat the verbal cue, just wait patiently)
3. Give pup the titbit the instant he/she enters the cage

In order to help your puppy get used to the cage allow him/her to wander in and out whenever he/she wishes. If you see him/her in the cage praise your pup and offer a titbit. If you have made the cage inviting enough you will probably find that your puppy will start to choose it as a sleeping area.

The next stage is to feed the puppy in the cage, this is essential if you have another dog as it will stop the puppy try to eat out of the adults bowl. Prepare the pup's food, put it in the cage and then say 'in your bed'. This time instead of a titbit the puppy will find its whole dinner and hence conclude it is a great place to be. Closing the door to soon can make the dog nervous or suspicious and he/she may become reluctant to go into the cage. However, once he/she is happy to go in for his feeds you can start to close the door while he/she is eating and opening the door as pup is about to finish. **NOTE:** many breeders use puppy pens so your puppy may well be used to being confined so introduce him/her to their own 'pen' with a meal and try closing the door slowly and assess the puppy's reaction.