



How to Choose a Dog Crate - Tips on How to Select the Correct Cage or Carrier for Your Dog or Puppy

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Dog Crates

There are many benefits for purchasing a dog crate for you puppy or dog, and very few arguments against its use. When used correctly the crate (sometimes referred to as a dog cage) can:

- Greatly assist in house training your dog or puppy.
- Prevent and rectify problems related to destructive behavior.
- Help you dog or puppy's fear of strangers
- Be used to transport your four legged friend safely in a car.
- Be a safe resting or sleeping place for your puppy or dog.
- Be used to confine you dog for a short period when you are unable to supervise him.

The crate should, and I must emphasize this, **never** be used for punishment nor should you puppy or dog be left locked in one for long periods of time.

Having arrived at the decision that you would like to buy a crate there are several factors that must be considered. This article will give you the information you require to make a satisfactory choice.

Selecting a suitable crate

There are several types of dog crate available these days to choose from. There are wire cages, plastic pet carriers, (often referred to as flight kennels) and soft-sided or nylon ones.

- The wire crate is probably the most common one and has the advantage of being strong and it permits your dog to look around whilst inside it. They often have the facility to allow you to adjust the internal size of the crate by the fitting of an additional panel. This has the benefit of letting you adjust the size as your puppy grows; so you purchase a crate large enough to accommodate you dog when fully grown and then reduce its size with the divider panel for you puppy and then increase the size as your puppy grows. The wire crate is usually collapsible and normally has a sliding tray in the floor which greatly assists cleaning.
- The plastic crate pet carrier is an alternative to the wire one. It's light and therefore easier to carry but its main drawback is the fact the they are generally enclosed on three sides and so do not let very much light in. They are on the whole, harder to clean out.
- Soft sided crates are most suitable for those dogs that are not renowned for being big chewers. They are light and are the easiest to carry which makes them suitable if you



intend to travel around a lot. The main problem is that if your dog likes to chew or scratch a lot they will be able to eventually "break out" of the crate. Therefore it is not really the best choice for a puppy.

Size of Crate

Whichever type of dog crate that you decide upon it is very important that you get the crate size that is large enough to permit your dog to stretch out on its side and turn around without being cramped and it must be tall enough to allow him to sit up without bumping his head on the top. That said don't get one that is too big as it will defeat the purpose of giving security, and one end will possibly be used as his own personal toilet.

So what size dog crate do you need? A way in which to calculate the ideal crate size is to measure the length of the dog from the tip of its nose to the end of its tail and the height from the top of its head to the ground. To these figures add 12 inches, (add more for giant breeds and less for toy breeds). The ideal depth of the crate is then the head to tail measurement plus twelve inches, the ideal height is the height measurement plus twelve inches, and the ideal width is three quarters of the ideal depth.

Cover

It is always useful to have a cover you can put over the crate to darken the inside of it. It can be used to calm and settle your dog as once covered it will stop him becoming distracted by anything that is going on around him. A blanket can be used, but a better option is a purpose made vinyl cover which will be a lot easier to clean and won't harbour fleas. If you choose to cover the crate ensure that there is sufficient ventilation and that the crate is not sited in direct sunlight.

Bedding

Choose to cover the whole floor of the crate and avoid leaving an area uncovered as this will possibly encourage soiling. Puppies don't want to soil their beds by choice so it will help to encourage bowel control. However there will likely be a few accidents so keep some machine washable beds to hand as replacements.

Water

It is very important that there is always water available and therefore it is a very good idea to invest on a quality clip on spill proof bowl or dispenser.

Safety Advice

- Never put your dog in a crate that is too small for him
- Remove the collar from your dog. You risk your dog being strangled if the collar's disc or buckle becomes caught in the bars (metal crates).



- Do not site the crate near to anything that your dog may be able to pull into his crate and chew; appliance cords, clothes etc.
- Ensure that your dog has sufficient water whilst in the crate.
- If you leave something in the crate, a toy for example, make sure that it is not going to cause problems if chewed and that it cannot be swallowed and become stuck in your dog's throat.
- Site the crate away from any draughts.

If using a metal crate, make sure that the bar spacing is such that your dog cannot get its legs stuck between the bars.

The above gives you some tips on how to choose a dog crate so that you will be able choose the correct type and size for your dog or puppy. For further advice, [Click Here](#) and learn further tips and advice to help you look after and [train your dog](#).