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## WHAT IS A DOG CRATE?

A dog crate is a rectangular enclosure with a top and a door, made in a variety of sizes proportioned to fit any type of dog. Constructed of wire, wood, metal, or molded fiberglass/plastic, its purpose is to provide guaranteed confinement for reasons of security, safety, housebreaking, protection of household goods, travel, illness, or just general control.

The dog crate has long been accepted, trusted and taken for granted by dog show exhibitors, obedience and field trial competitors, trainers, breeders, groomers, veterinarians, and anyone else who handles dogs regularly. Individual pet owners, however, usually reject the idea of using a crate because they consider such enforced close confinement unfair, and even harmful, to the dog.

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## CRUELTY OR KINDNESS?

### AS THE PET OWNER SEES IT:

"It's like a jail - it's cruel. I'd never put my dog in a cage like that!" If this is your first reaction to using a crate, you are a typical pet owner. As a reasoning human being, you really value your freedom; and since you consider your pet an extension of the human family, it's only natural to feel that closing him in a crate would be mean and inhumane, would probably cause him to resent and even to hate you, and might well result in psychological damage. BUT YOU ARE NOT YOUR DOG.

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### AS THE DOG SEES IT:

"I love having a room/house of my very own - it's my private special place - my "security blanket" and the closed door really doesn't bother me." If your dog could talk, this is how he might well express his reaction to using a crate! He would tell you that the crate helps to satisfy the "den instinct" inherited from his den-dwelling ancestors and relatives, and that he is not afraid or frustrated when closed in. He would further admit that he is actually happier and more secure having his life controlled and structured by human beings, and would far rather be prevented from causing trouble than be punished for it later. So... to you it may be a cage - to him, it's home.

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## WHY USE A CRATE?

A dog crate, correctly and humanely used, can have many advantages for both you and your pet. With the help of a crate:

### YOU:

- can enjoy complete peace of mind when leaving your dog home alone, knowing that nothing can be soiled or destroyed and that he is comfortable, protected, and not developing any bad habits;
  - can housebreak your dog more quickly by using the close confinement to encourage control, establish a regular routine for outdoor elimination, and to prevent "accidents" at night or when left alone;
  - can effectively confine your dog at times when he may be underfoot (meals, family activities), unwelcome (guests, workmen, etc.), over-excited or bothered by too much confusion or too many children, or ill;
  - can travel with your dog without risk of the driver being dangerously distracted or the dog getting loose and hopelessly lost, and with the assurance that he can easily adapt to any strange surroundings as long as he has his familiar "security blanket" along.
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### YOUR DOG:

- can enjoy the privacy and security of a "den" of his own to which he can retreat when tired, stressed, or ill;
  - can avoid much of the fear/confusion/punishment caused by your reaction to problem behavior;
  - can more easily learn to control his bowels and associate elimination only with the outdoors or other designated location;
  - can be spared the loneliness and frustration of having to be isolated (basement, garage, outside) from comfortable indoor surroundings when being restricted or left alone;
  - can be conveniently included in family outings, visits, and trips instead of being left behind alone at home or in a boarding kennel.
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YOU WANT TO ENJOY YOUR PET AND BE PLEASED WITH HIS BEHAVIOR... YOUR DOG WANTS LITTLE MORE FROM LIFE THAN TO PLEASE YOU... A DOG CRATE CAN HELP TO MAKE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WHAT EACH OF YOU WANTS AND NEEDS IT TO BE.

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### USE - BUT DON'T ABUSE

The use of a dog crate is not recommended for a dog which must be frequently or regularly left alone for extended periods of time, such as all or much of the day while the owner is away at work, school, etc. If it is attempted, the dog must be well exercised both before and after crating, given lots of personal positive attention, and be allowed complete freedom at night (including sleeping near his owner).

His crate must be large enough to permit him comfortably to stretch out fully on his side and to feel that he has freedom of movement; it must also be equipped with a clip-on dishes for water.

In the case of a puppy, the crate must be used strictly as a "play-pen" for general confinement, having plenty of space for a cozy box for sleeping at one end and papers for elimination at the other, with clip-on dishes for water and for dry food. Although a puppy can be raised in this manner, the limited human supervision may result in his being poorly adjusted socially and difficult to housebreak and to train in general.

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CRATE OR NO CRATE, ANY DOG CONSTANTLY DENIED THE HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP IT NEEDS AND CRAVES IS GOING TO BE A LONELY PET AND MAY STILL FIND WAYS TO EXPRESS ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND GENERAL STRESS.

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### WATH KIND OF CRATE IS BEST?

The most practical dog crate for use by the pet owner is the collapsible wire mesh type, available in a wide variety of sizes. Lightweight and easily handled, it allows total ventilation and permits the dog to see everything going on around him. A wooden, metal, or fiberglass/plastic airline crate will certainly also serve the purpose, but it restricts air and vision, is less convenient to handle and transport and has limited size selections.

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### WHAT SIZE SHOULD A CRATE BE?

A crate should always be large enough to permit any age dog to stretch out flat on his side without being cramped and to sit up without hitting his head on the top.