

Magazine

Is it cruel to put a puppy in a crate at night?

Posted on April 3, 2012 by Luke



Whilst a dog crate may seem cruel, this actually isn't the case – dogs are essentially den animals, which means that having an enclosed area for sleeping is quite natural for them. In the wild, foxes and wolves burrow underground to sleep, and domestic dogs tend to prefer sleeping under things too, like tables and chairs.

Training your puppy to sleep in a dog crate is the first step towards making the transition into a comfy dog bed, and it's essential to get pups into the habit of sleeping in a fixed spot, rather than restlessly wandering around at bedtime. For this reason, crates should never be used as a punishment: for successful puppy crate training, your canine companion needs to associate their den with positive things.

An ideal crate is one that allows your puppy to stretch out fully and sit up comfortably. Made from wire, wood, plastic or even canvas, crates are available in a range of materials, although wood isn't so good for puppies, which may have a tendency to chew.

You'll also need [a blanket for the dog crate](#), which should cover the entire length of the crate to stop your pet from seeing the space as an indoor toilet. However, you should bear in mind that young puppies may continue to soil in the early stages of training, so it's important to use a [machine washable blanket](#) and check it regularly.

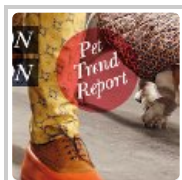
Patience is essential for puppy training. Place the crate in an area where the dog can both see and hear you (ideally near to your bed) so that when they're put in the crate for the night, they can see you sleeping. Initially, some pups may need a bit of help getting to sleep, so covering their crate with an extra blanket and giving them a [puppy sleeping aid](#) or [puppy comforter](#) can really help.

Keep the crate door open for the first few times, and tempt your dog in with treats and their favourite puppy sleeping aid. Gradually, after they've become accustomed to the smell of the crate and reassured by the puppy comforter, they will be happier to sleep with the door closed.

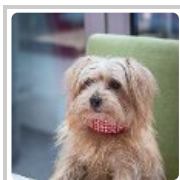
Remember that puppies need regular toilet breaks, so walk your dog regularly throughout the day and give them plenty of opportunity to soil before you put them in their crate for the night. You should also attach a small water dispenser to the crate, just in case your pooch gets thirsty.

With a bit of patience, plenty of praise, a comfy blanket for the dog crate and a puppy comforter, training your pet to sleep in their crate can be relatively easy and rewarding for both of you. For further tips on puppy crate training step by step there are several helpful websites available, including this [puppy crate training forum](#), where you can find plenty of advice from fellow dog owners.

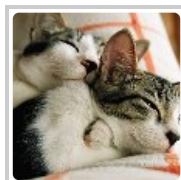
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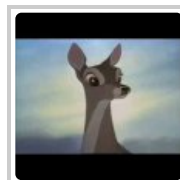
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