



THE INDOOR KENNEL

A safe, comfortable den for your dog, inside your own home?

An indoor kennel should ideally only be used as a safe place where your adult dog can take himself if he needs to get away from things that worry him and as his own space, where he will not be disturbed and can rest – with the door **permanently open**.

However, it can also be temporarily used for training purposes – as an aid for housetraining and for safely confining a puppy for short periods when you cannot supervise and overnight in the bedroom, for example.

Please note that if a dog or puppy is shut in an indoor kennel for long periods of time, this can become a serious welfare issue and is not something that we recommend.

What is an indoor kennel and where can I get one from?

There are several different types of indoor kennel, but probably the most common and easy to use is the one that looks like a cage, with one or two doors on the side and/or end. This type is made of wire mesh and folds down for easy storage when not in use.

- When you choose your dog's kennel it needs to be big enough for him to be able to sit, stand up and turn around in. He must also be able to lay flat on his side and stretch his legs out without touching the sides. Remember to allow room for how much your puppy may grow.
- You can buy an indoor kennel from larger pet stores, dog shows and from some veterinary clinics. You can also find them advertised in dog magazines and on the Internet, where they can be sent to you by mail order.
- Although they may appear to be fairly expensive to buy, try to remember that they may save you a lot of money by preventing chewing and toilet accidents in your home.
- Because the kennels are pretty impossible to damage, you should be able to sell yours on, if and when you don't need it any more.

How can I make it a nice place, where my dog will want to go?

The kennel should be made into a place where your dog can feel happy and relaxed, so you need to set it up so that it will be cosy and comfortable for him.

- Put it in a part of the home where you spend a lot of time, so that your dog has you nearby and won't be lonely to start with – or he may begin by hating his new home.
- Remember that you can move it into the bedroom for him to use at bedtime. Dogs sleep better with company and if he has his own comfortable sleeping area it will help to keep him off the bed.
- To help keep out draughts, try to place it in a corner and then cover the back and perhaps also the sides with a blanket or towel to make it more den-like.
- Put comfortable bedding inside that is also easy to clean. If you have a puppy, you may need to place some newspaper at one end, in case he has an accident.
- You will need to give your dog access to water, so put in a water bowl or get one that clips onto the side of the kennel, so that it cannot get knocked over.

How can I make my dog like the indoor kennel?

If you are using it for housetraining it is important that you get your dog used to his kennel very gradually and without force. If you just shove him in and shut the door, you'll frighten him and he won't want to go in again.

- Put some treats in the kennel to tempt your dog inside. Do this several times a day and start to give your dog all of his meals inside the kennel. Don't close the door yet.
- If your dog has bedding that he has been using up until now, after a few days place this in the kennel with one of his toys. Give him lots of fuss or a treat whenever you see him go into the kennel.
- When he looks relaxed inside the kennel, or when he is eating his dinner in there, close the door for a few moments and then open it again. This should be for only seconds to start with and then slowly build up to minutes.
- Once your dog is happy with being shut in with you there in the room with him, practice leaving the room for very short periods of time and then returning. Slowly increase the time that you leave him alone.

Puppies tend to get used to an indoor kennel very quickly, especially if you use it whenever they need to eat or sleep. It is particularly useful at night time, especially if you plan to have the puppy in the bedroom – all dogs and puppies need company for a proper night's sleep. Older dogs may take a little longer and need more patience, but should get used to it with time (and a lot of treats!).

When should we use the indoor kennel?

As well as being a nice place for your dog to 'chill out' in, it can also help you to keep your dog safe for short periods at times when you cannot give him all of your attention. Here are some examples of when it will be most useful:

- If you have a new puppy and an older dog in your home and you cannot pay close attention to their playtime to make sure it is safe, you can put your puppy into the kennel to keep him out of harms way until you are able to watch them both.
- Puppies and dogs should never be left alone with children. If you cannot be there, then you can pop your dog into the kennel so that both child and dog can be safe.
- Puppies need a lot of rest – but often don't know it. For over-excited, boisterous puppies that need some 'time-out', the indoor kennel be a quiet, restful place without distractions to relax in.
- If you are busy around the house, cooking for example, then your puppy can be kept safe in the kennel.
- During housetraining you can keep your dog or puppy safe in the indoor kennel whenever you are unable to keep an eye on him.
- You can also use the indoor kennel when travelling in your car as a safe resting-place.

Punishment?

You must never put your dog into the indoor kennel to punish him or to keep him away from the rest of the family. You should never keep your dog in the indoor kennel all day. All dogs - puppies and adults need lots of social contact throughout the day and must be taken out regularly for the toilet, exercise, play and training. Do not turn the kennel into a prison.

Remember that the indoor kennel must be a place where your dog feels secure and comfortable at all times, and ideally, the door should be left open so that your dog can choose when he uses it (once past the puppy/training stages).

- It is not a place where children (or adults) should be allowed to tease your dog.
- It must never be used to punish or frighten your dog.
- If an indoor kennel is used as a place for punishment, your dog or puppy will never be happy there and will not want to use it as his home.

We hope that this factsheet will help your dog to love his indoor kennel and use it as a safe, comfortable place to relax. **If you have any problems getting your dog used to his indoor kennel, then please contact us for further information and advice.**

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