

# How to Choose a Wire Kennel or Plastic Crate for Your Dog

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

Dogs, like their wild cousins, wolves, are naturally den animals. If introduced correctly, wire or plastic kennels provide a sense of security - a refuge where your dog can go whenever he needs to get away from the high activity level of your home, or just wants some peace and quiet.

## Reasons to purchase a kennel

House training: It is a dog's natural inclination toward dens that makes kennels so useful to house train puppies. Since puppies will not normally soil an appropriately-sized 'den,' kennels are extremely effective for helping puppies gain control over their bladders. They help reduce the number of accidents you will have to clean up, and cut in half the time it takes to teach puppies where they are supposed to relieve themselves. When it comes to house training a new puppy, there is nothing that makes the training go faster or easier than a puppy kennel. Placed in a kennel that is just the size they need to lay down and no more, house training is often completed in 10 to 14 days.

Protecting the puppy and your house: Kennels are useful during the puppy period as a way to protect your home from the mad dashes that knock over the plants and furniture, chewing teeth, and generally uncontrollable behavior. Kennels can keep puppies from forming bad habits when they are not under a watchful eye. As an adult, the kennel will be just as useful. If puppies are introduced to a kennel correctly, they will not resent them, and most will actually consider them their private hideaway spot.

Traveling: Traveling with pets, be they puppies or adults, is safer and easier when you use a kennel to control them. We once had a car come through the wall of our clinic when a dog got down by a driver's feet and prevented her from applying her brakes.

Plastic and wire kennels are both very good products for dogs and cats. Today's wire kennels offer convenience and versatility features that usually make them a better choice for most pet owners.

## Advantages of wire kennels

- Many wire kennels are collapsible, Fold & Carry styles, making them easier to store and transport.
- Wire kennels can be sized to your growing dog with removable divider panels that expand living space.
- Wire kennels are easier to clean -- particularly kennels with the new, seamless-style polyethylene floor pans.
- Wire kennels offer better ventilation.
- Wire kennels provide more and better visibility for your pet.



## Advantages of plastic kennels

There are, however, instances when plastic kennels are a sensible choice. If you plan on traveling with your pet by plane, plastic kennels are required by law. Also, some owners feel plastic kennels provide a greater sense of security and privacy for their pets. This quiet den-like refuge is good for high activity level households, particularly those with young children. However, a blanket or cage cover placed over a metal kennel can provide the same result.

## Kennel size



Especially if you are using the kennel to house train your puppy, do not make the common mistake of buying one that is too large for your puppy. If it is too spacious, your puppy will eliminate in a 'remote' corner. Buy a puppy kennel you will only use for training, or buy one that you can use throughout your dog's life and add divider panels when the dog is smaller to reduce the area to the appropriate size.

The right size kennel is one in which your pet can lie down, turn around, and have three to four inches of extra head space when sitting or standing. While the right-sized kennel may seem too confining or too small to you, it is not for your dog.

As mentioned above, divider panels can be used in wire kennels to adjust their size. If you decide on a plastic kennel, understand that you may need to purchase a bigger one later as your puppy grows, since it must be sized to the puppy to ensure successful training.

If you feel uneasy about kenneling your dog, we strongly encourage you to talk to your veterinarian, professional trainers, or

other pet owners who have used kennels. Anyone who knows dogs will know the value of kennels.