GET YOUR PUPPY EDUCATION STARTED HERE

Crate Training

BUILDING A SANCTUARY YOUR DOG CHOOSES WILLINGLY

What this guide covers

- Phase 1: Environmental setup
- Phase 2: Building positive value
- Phase 3: The boring release
- Why puppies whine
- FAQ and cheat sheet

Done correctly, the crate becomes a sanctuary your dog chooses willingly a place to self-regulate and rest without needing you in sight.

The most common mistake: crating only when you leave. That teaches the dog the crate predicts your absence. Passive crating at home builds real independence.

Questions about crate training? I'm here to help.

WEBSITE
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Les Pawtounes Dog Training

Phase 1: Environmental Setup

Quiet location

Place the crate away from high-traffic areas and young children. The goal is a calm, predictable environment where your dog can truly settle.

Strategic coverage

Cover with a dark sheet to create a den-like atmosphere. Wire crate tip: place cardboard overhanging the top so the sheet cannot be pulled through the bars.

Camera monitoring

A small camera lets you check in without physically approaching and accidentally triggering a reaction. Filming also lets you see what is actually happening versus what you imagine.

Airflow and sound

Ensure proper ventilation. White noise or calming music muffles household sounds that trigger alertness and interrupt sleep.

Crate type

For dogs with high anxiety, Impact Dog Crates and RuffLand provide a more enclosed den-like feel that lowers arousal and prevents escape attempts.

Phase 2: Building Positive Value

Serve all meals inside

Every meal reinforces that the crate is a high-value, rewarding space. This one habit does more than almost anything else.

Enrichment only inside

Lick mats, frozen Kongs, and long-lasting chews go inside the crate only. This makes it the most interesting place in the house.

Daily rhythm

Have your dog nap and sleep in the crate even when you are home. The crate must not be associated exclusively with your departure.

Safety first

Remove bedding and stuffed toys if your dog chews. Ingestion of material is a medical emergency. When in doubt, leave the crate bare.

Short and positive

Keep initial sessions brief and always end before the dog shows stress. Increase duration only when the dog is fully relaxed.

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Phase 3: The Boring Release Method

How you let your dog out of the crate dictates their energy for the next hour. Three non-negotiables before you approach:

1. The leash is ready
2. Rewards are in your pocket
3. Your energy is neutral

Approach neutrally

Walk up to the crate calmly. No baby talk, no eye contact. Your energy sets the tone.

The inch rule

Open the door just an inch. If your dog pushes against it, close it until they step back or sit. The door opens only when the dog is not pushing against it.

Leash first

Clip the leash on while the dog is still inside. The leash is a tool for a calm transition, not an invitation to bolt.

Neutral affection

Avoid excited petting or high-pitched praise for the first 10 minutes after release. Keep the exit as unremarkable as the entry.

The golden rule: never release a whining dog. Wait for a beat of silence or a physical shift, a sit or a step back, before touching the latch. Releasing a noisy dog teaches them that whining earns freedom.

Understanding Crate FOMO: Why Is My Puppy Whining?

The social magnet effect

Your puppy's instinct is to stay close to the pack. When they can hear or smell you nearby, every part of them says they should be out with you.

Hyper-awareness

They cannot fully relax because they are tracking your every move. The solution is to make crate time a normal, unremarkable part of the day.

Temperament

Sensitive puppies and those predisposed to anxiety will struggle more. This is not a character flaw. It means the protocol needs to be applied more carefully and slowly.

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Common Questions

Is it normal to have issues only during the day?

Yes. Nighttime is naturally low-stimulus. During the day, the sounds of life and the proximity of their person trigger FOMO. Daytime crating is a separate skill and needs to be built deliberately.

How long until I see progress?

With consistent, neutral releases, most puppies improve within 7 to 14 days. If whining includes panic behaviors such as drooling, clawing, or frantic panting, that is separation anxiety and requires a different approach entirely.

What if they genuinely need to go out?

Keep it all business. Leash on, straight to the potty spot with minimal interaction, and straight back to the crate. No play, no praise, no lingering.

Crate Training Cheat Sheet

WHAT TO DO	NOTES
Choose a quiet location	Away from high-traffic areas and young children
Cover with a dark sheet	Creates a secure, den-like atmosphere
Serve all meals inside	Builds a positive association with the crate
Use enrichment toys inside only	Lick mats or safe chews only
Nap and sleep in the crate	Makes crate time part of the daily rhythm
Remove bedding if dog chews	Safety first, prevents ingestion
Play calming sounds nearby	Helps muffle external noises
Use the crate when home too	Builds independence, not just a departure signal
Keep sessions short at first	Always end on a positive note

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