
CONFINEMENT AREA – YOUR DOG’S PLAYPEN

What is it?

A place for your dog to stay when you can’t provide 100% supervision. In other words, when you are out, or busy around the house, and can’t keep your eyes on him the entire time. It prevents chewing accidents, potty accidents, and teaches your dog to be alone.

Why do I need one?

1. For successful house- and alone training.
2. To keep your dog out of trouble when you can’t monitor him, and to give yourself a break.

Confinement? Surely that’s too strict?

Not at all. It is the best possible start for your dog in your household. People often give a new dog complete freedom right away. Then, when he has an accident on the carpet or chews on the legs of the coffee table, they confine him, and confinement becomes a punishment.

Instead, give your dog a safe place from the beginning, and let him make a gradual and successful transition to his new home. He will be much happier, and your furniture will remain intact.

Setting up the confinement area.

The ideal confinement area is easy to clean and easy to close off with a door or baby gate. It should be mostly free of furniture and non-dog related objects. The best places for a confinement area are the kitchen, laundry room, bathroom, or an empty spare room.

Furnish the confinement area with a bed or a crate with something soft to sleep on, a water bowl, and several toys, including a favorite bone, chew toy, or a Kong stuffed with part of your dog’s meal. Make the confinement area the only place your dog gets to have this particular toy.

Getting your dog used to his confinement area:

Step 1. Take your dog out for a walk or bathroom break.

Step 2. Give him a chew bone or a stuffed Kong. Leave him alone in the confinement area while you go about your business in the house.

Step 3. After 5 minutes or before he finishes his chew, let him out but don't make a big deal about it or make a fuss over him.

Repeat steps 1-3, gradually increasing the time you leave your dog in his confinement area without leaving the house. Vary the length of your absences, from 30 seconds to 20 minutes, and repeat them throughout the day.

Leave your dog in his confinement area (or crate) at night. It is normal for him to try a little crying as a strategy to get out, so brace yourself for that. He has to get used to alone-time.

Step 4. Within the first day or two, start leaving the house for really short intervals like going to the mailbox or taking the trash out. Gradually work up to longer absences, like running errands.

Training Tip:

Be patient. It may take several days or weeks for your dog to get used to his confinement area.

Troubleshooting:

If your dog begins to howl, whine, or bark, wait until he has been quiet for at least 5-10 seconds before you respond. Otherwise, he will learn that whining or barking makes you appear or gets him out of the confinement area, and he will bark or cry longer in the future. If he is truly distressed, stop confinement training and reach out to a qualified, professional dog trainer for help!