

PUPPY PLAY PEN & CRATE TRAINING

There are two approaches to continuing the potty training: 1. **Crate Training from Day 1:** The pup is kept in a crate right away upon arriving at their new home. 2. **Crate and Playpen Setup:** The pup is placed in a playpen area with access to a smaller crate set inside the pen (with the crate door open.) After a week or two, when pup understanding their surroundings, the crate is closed for short periods of time (5 – 10 minutes) while you're home and time is gradually extended. More details below.

Pup's Safety is Our Number One Concern.

We like using a puppy play pen and a crate. Puppy is safe and it also allows humans to sleep through the night, rather than getting up and taking pup outside middle of night). This approach gives the puppy some breathing room to adjust to their new surroundings and not panic being closed in crate with people they don't know. If you have another approach, that's fine. We share this as an option.



What's A Puppy Plan Pen?

A puppy play pen is a small, confined area – about 4' x 5' and includes:

Indoor Fencing – Amazon sells many options. If fencing is too flimsy or less than 40" high, pup can knock over or move it.

Vinyl – Lowe's/Home Depot have pre-cut pieces for \$30. Make sure it spans a good 6 inches outside the fence so pup can't chew edge. It's easy to wipe clean too.

Crate – This is set *inside* the play pen. Smaller works better to start. If you're using a larger crate, not a big deal. Crate door is off or open. Pups go in and out as they like. (This image shows *older pup* with pad inside the crate – we don't recommend that until pup is a little older, and not at night when they could ingest the material.)

Tinkle Tray – A plastic style (below), any size, with snap on grid, can be used with a puppy pad or wood shavings. Pups have been known to

digest puppy pads, so don't skip the grid cover.



Main perks of the puppy play pen

Pup is always safe, especially when the humans are sleeping or busy. Eight week old puppies typically sleep 16 hours a day, so it's helpful to have a place for them that is not always in a crate.

SAFETY WARNING: Toys and bedding in play pen ONLY if you are watching or close by. Never at night. Puppies can chew just about anything with those sharp teeth. Even a Kong in under 20 minutes. And that often means surgery. Pups sleep on plastic bottom pen here and do not have toys at night.

Week 1: Pup is going outside after meals, and every 2-3 hours **during the day**, if you are home. And likely tinkling in between. Evenings and overnight just plan for accidents. We don't recommend taking out during the middle of the night though you can. Just don't talk or reward. It's a silent effort. Plan on messy mornings and put on a smile. They so want to please and an upset reaction adds to confusion. *Never ever scold or hit.* Only praise.

Week 2: You'll find less accidents during the day and pup starting to understand your schedule. And you'll know how much time between eating and pooping (usually 10 – 20 minutes), so you're making it outside. This week or next, you can close crate for 2-5 minutes while human is bustling nearby.

Week 3 – 4: Close to accident free during day by Week 4 in the pen. Pup is getting used to time in crate with door closed. In another week, pup is ready to be closed in crate at night if that is preferred.

The first week is tough. It is normal to have whimpering or even howling. Since pup is safe, it's okay to turn up the sound effects on your phone and wait it out. It is *not the end of the world* if you buckle and pick up the pup – during day or night – if they are very upset. Minimal talking. Just a break and re-set. Remember, they don't know you yet! They will absolutely settle quicker after about a week.

The rhythm of the schedule. Pup lifted out of pen, goes out to tinkle/poop, plays with humans, outside another time and then back in the playpen area. If it's time to feed, you'll fold that in.

Pups tinkle when not confined. Pups tinkle if they are out of crate/pen and just wandering around more than 20-minutes. Use puppy play pen as the place they remain for significant blocks of time.

Foster interest in the crate. Place a few pieces of kibble in the back. Give them a reason to explore.

The crate can be moved outside the pen area. Consider placing crate (or a spare) near your kitchen or living room so pup can watch activity. At this early stage, crate shouldn't mean my human is leaving.

Potty training in general. When you take your puppy out of the pen/crate in the morning (and every time!) pick them up and carry them outside and put on the leash. Walk them around to do "their business" and bring them right back in. As your puppy gets a little older, they can start to understand when it's time to go outside and play and when it's time to "do their business." You may decide there's a part of your yard that means fun and part for tinkle.