

CRATE TRAINING SCHEDULE

Day-by-Day Method for Puppies



Crate Training Done Right

A properly crate-trained dog has a safe space they CHOOSE. They walk in willingly, settle calmly, and come out relaxed. The opposite — a dog who panics in the crate — is the result of rushed introduction, not a flaw with the crate method itself. This 7-day schedule produces willing crate users in dogs of any age.

3 rules that prevent crate failure

- **The crate is never punishment.** The dog must always associate the crate with safety, calm, and reward. Time-outs in the crate poison the association permanently.
- **Build duration gradually.** The biggest mistake is jumping from 5 minutes to 4 hours overnight. Follow the schedule.
- **Size matters.** Just big enough to stand, turn around, and lie down. Larger = the dog pottys in one corner and sleeps in the other.

Crate sizing chart

Adult weight 1-25 lbs → 22" crate. 26-40 lbs → 30". 41-70 lbs → 36". 71-90 lbs → 42". 91+ lbs → 48". For puppies of large breeds, buy the adult-size crate WITH a divider that adjusts as they grow.

Stuck on crate training?

The Fast Dog Training program has video troubleshooting for every common crate issue (crying, refusing to enter, accidents inside). Used by 50,000+ owners.

→ [See the Training Program](#)

The 7-Day Schedule

Day 1: Introduction

Place crate in a busy room, door open. Toss treats inside throughout the day. Let puppy explore freely. Goal: puppy enters willingly to retrieve treats. Don't force entry.

Day 2: Voluntary Entry

Continue treat-tossing. Add: feed all meals just inside the open crate door. Goal: puppy walks in calmly to eat.

Day 3: Full Meals Inside

Move food bowl all the way to the back. Puppy walks fully inside to eat. Goal: comfortable eating in the back of the crate, door still open.

Day 4: Door Closed Briefly

While puppy eats, close door for 30 seconds. Open before they finish. Repeat with longer durations: 1 min, 5 min. Goal: puppy doesn't notice the door.

Day 5: Door Closed + Calm

Use a long-lasting chew (frozen Kong, bully stick). Puppy enters with chew, you close door, leave the room for 5-10 minutes. Goal: puppy stays calm without you visible.

Day 6: 30 Minutes

Build to 30 minutes alone in crate while you're home but in another room. Goal: puppy settles to sleep, no crying.

Day 7: 1-2 Hours

Build to 1-2 hours while you're out of the house briefly (errand-length absences). Goal: dog accepts being alone in the crate.

After Day 7: Maximum Duration by Age

Age	Daytime Max	Overnight
8-10 weeks	1 hour	4 hours (set 1 alarm)
10-12 weeks	2 hours	5 hours
3-4 months	3 hours	6-7 hours
4-6 months	4 hours	7-8 hours
6+ months	4-6 hours	Full night (8-10 hours)

Working long days?

If you work 8+ hours, your puppy needs a midday break. Options: paid dog walker, neighbor, come home for lunch, or doggy daycare 2-3 days per week. Crating a puppy 9+ hours alone causes the bladder failures and anxiety the schedule is designed to prevent.

Troubleshooting

Symptom	Most Likely Cause	Fix
Crying for 30+ minutes	Built duration too fast	Back up to last duration that worked. Build by 5-min increments.
Refuses to enter	Negative association from past forcing	Reset for 3-5 days: door always open, treats inside, no closing.
Pottys inside the crate	Crate too big OR left too long	Add divider. Reduce duration by 50%. Check schedule.
Chews crate bars	Boredom or frustration	Add chew toy (frozen Kong). Increase exercise before crating.
Suddenly anxious in crate	Trauma association (stranger broke in, firework, etc)	Pause crate. Rebuild from Day 1 over 2-3 weeks.

Get Fast Dog Training

Step-by-step video demos for crate training, plus everything else your dog needs. Used by 50,000+ owners.

→ [See the Training Program](#)

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For more free training resources, visit dogtrainingbybreed.com.