

Every Dog Needs a Den

Why use a den?

Dogs are den animals. They need their own sanctuary that is just large enough for them to fit inside and feel secure. They need a "home away from home" where they can go when they are stressed. If you don't provide your dog a "den" of its own, it may make do with whatever is around -- a chair, the narrow place behind the couch, or the wedge of space between the bed and the wall.

A crate is an indoor doghouse that is used for brief periods of time. Its primary function is to serve as a bed or den. It can also be an ideal tool to housetrain your pet or to keep canines that suffer from separation anxiety from destroying the house while you run a few errands. However, the dog is not supposed to live in the crate. Endless hours in the crate can lead to severe social and isolation problems for your dog -- and it will no longer see the crate as a special retreat.

When you are home, your dog needs to be out with you. In fact, the crate should be kept in the room where the family spends most of its time. That way, your dog can seek refuge from the hubbub of household activity, yet still feel like a part of the family.

Once your dog realizes that the crate is a sanctuary and that no one can bother it while it is in its "den," your dog will begin to seek out the crate on its own. For more information on crate training, contact **Canine Manners 'n More**.