

Dog Housing Guide at Tractor Supply Co.



Dogs are beloved members of our families. It's natural to want the best for them in all aspects of their lives, including housing. With so many dog beds and crates available, where do you start? We'll walk you through the different types of dog bedding and housing, so you can decide which is the best option for your pup.

Types of Dog Housing

Dog housing options vary by your dog's age, size and personality. The most common types of dog crates and housing are:

- Indoor crates
- Outdoor dog kennels
- Dog beds
- Doghouses
- Playpens
- Pet carriers

There are benefits—and potential drawbacks—to every type of dog dwelling.

Indoor Dog Crates

Dog crates come highly recommended by vets and dog behavioral experts. "A dog crate is simply the best temporary training tool for housetraining, allowing dogs to teach themselves to be calmer and quieter and preventing adolescent-onset separation anxiety," says Dr. Ian Dunbar of Dunbar Academy, a dog behavior and training academy.

Crates serve as a dog's private "den" and offer benefits like:

- **Training:** Puppy crates help pups establish a routine, learn self-control and train their bladder, and the confinement offers a sense of security. Want to **train your puppy to sleep through the night**? Place the crate beside your bed, and your breathing will help soothe them.
- **Quiet time:** Is your dog energetic and spirited? A dog crate can help them understand when to wind down. Put them in their crate for some downtime when you don't want them underfoot, like when guests arrive or you're prepping dinner.
- **Travel:** Dogs are creatures of habit, and traveling somewhere new can be stressful. A familiar crate is comforting when they're surrounded by new stimuli.

"What is cruel is punishing your dog for breaking household rules that you never effectively communicated, which is the most common alternative to successful crate training. Most dogs really enjoy having their own little den they can retreat to for R&R," says Dr. Dunbar.

To ensure your dog doesn't dread the crate, avoid using it as punishment. By introducing your dog to their new crate through positive reinforcement like treats, toys and praise, your furry friend will view crate time as a good thing.

How to Choose the Perfect Dog Crate

Follow these tips to find the perfect crate for your dog's size and energy level.

- **Select the right material.** To choose a crate, the two most important things to consider are material and airflow. Plastic and metal are the primary materials used for crates, and each has its advantages.
 - **Plastic:** Lightweight plastic dog crates are easy to transport. Smaller openings mean less airflow but allow for more privacy and fewer outside distractions.
 - **Metal:** A wire-frame dog cage allows ample airflow and helps keep your dog cool. Larger gaps between the bars let your dog view its surroundings.
- **Choose the right size.** Dog crate sizes vary dramatically to fit a range of breeds. A good rule of thumb is to make sure your dog can stand and sit up straight, turn around, stretch and sprawl out. However, don't choose a crate that's too big, especially for puppies who haven't mastered training. If their crate is too big, your puppy may designate a corner as a toilet. As your pup grows, upgrade from a puppy crate to a large dog crate, or opt for a dog crate with a divider from the beginning. An adjustable crate lets you section it off and extend the space as your puppy grows.

- **Make the crate cozy.** Give your pup a soft place to rest by placing a dog bed or cushion on top of the crate's plastic tray. Is your puppy still potty training? Go for a washable dog bed that can be tossed in the laundry if your puppy has an accident. Clip-on water bowls and dispensers give your dog access to food and water without spills. Dog crate covers can help make the interior of their crate more private and block out excess stimuli.

Your dog's favorite toys also help make their dog crate comfortable and prevent them from barking out of boredom. A hollow rubber toy filled with peanut butter or kibble is an excellent form of in-crate entertainment.

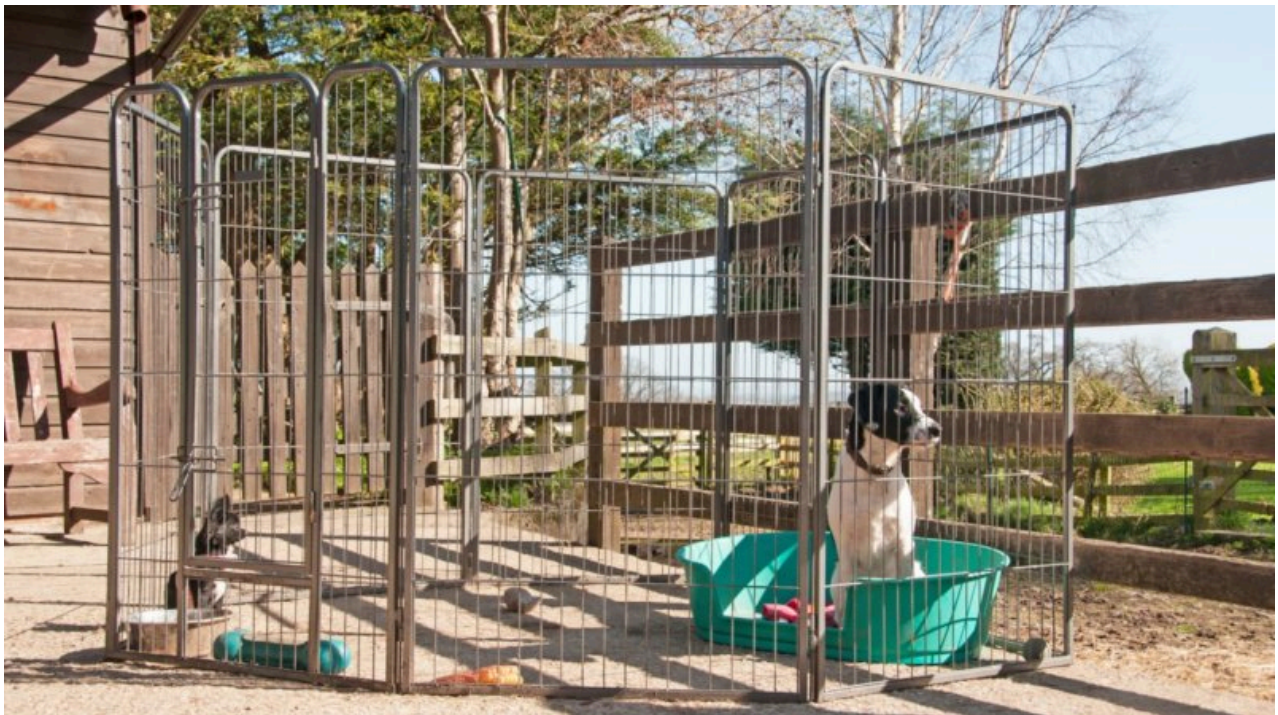
- **Avoid lengthy crate time.** How much is too much depends on your dog, but eight hours is generally the maximum – which is about how long an adult dog can hold their bladder. Aim for four to six hours for seniors and about two hours for puppies.

Dogs are social by nature, and too much time in a crate leads to loneliness. If you're often gone for long stretches during the day, doggy daycare, dog walkers and drop-ins from family or friends can give your dog the socialization and exercise they need.

When used correctly, a dog crate is a humane training tool that is encouraged by many experts. Make the crate warm and comfortable, avoid excess time in it, and associate the crate with positive behavior to help your dog view their crate as a cozy security blanket.

"Close confinement at nighttime—and during the day when unsupervised—is a very smart plan for new puppies and adopted adult dogs until they have been house trained and chew toy trained. Once they're toilet trained and chew toy trained, they may want to sleep in their crate with the door open, or on a dog bed, or anywhere that you want," says Dr. Dunbar.

Outdoor Kennels and Dog Cages



Active dogs thrive in **outside dog kennels**. They're large enough for exercise and often have access to indoor areas to escape the elements. Like crates, dog kennels serve as a dog's personal space, but with more room. Spending time in an outdoor dog kennel also provides additional stimulation for curious dogs.

To make the best use of your dog kennel, always use it as positive reinforcement, not as a punishment. Also, don't use an outdoor kennel as permanent housing. Dogs need regular socialization, and too much alone time in their kennel can be distressing.

How to Choose the Right Outdoor Kennel



Follow these tips to find an outdoor kennel that's perfect for your pup.

- **Find the right size.** Kennels come in all shapes and sizes. While dog crates should feel cozy, there's no such thing as too big when it comes to kennels. Your dog should have enough space to play and a designated section to sleep and rest. Choose a kennel that's at least five times the length of your dog.
- **Consider the kennel's walls.** Most outside dog kennels feature metal or wire-frame walls that allow for plenty of fresh air. Pick a galvanized metal or chain link dog kennel that won't rust or develop sharp edges when exposed to the elements. Higher walls will also keep your dog from jumping out and other animals from climbing in.
- **Choose your flooring:** An outdoor dog pen can be set up directly on grass or with specialty flooring. Pea gravel, concrete and high-density plastic are all easy-to-clean options. Wood floors look nice but aren't practical – they absorb urine and may splinter and rot over time.
- **Include access to indoor space:** Your dog needs a covered area for protection from the sun, rain and severe weather, and an angled roof provides run-off from rain. Remember to keep your own height in mind – you'll need to fit underneath to clean.
- **Add extras for increased comfort.** Always supply plenty of water, food and toys. An insulated doghouse or covered indoor area will help keep your dog cool in the summer and **warm in the winter**. A heat lamp or heated mat can keep your dog warm in the chillier months – just limit the time your dog is in the elements.
- **Keep track of kennel time.** As long as the weather is nice and your dog enjoys it, it's perfectly fine to leave them in their kennel for up to eight hours. Unlike an indoor crate, an outdoor kennel allows your dog to get plenty of fresh air, exercise and do its business.

A kennel with indoor or insulated elements can be used all year. However, you'll want to limit kennel time to 30 to 45 minutes when temperatures rise above 78°F or drop below 45°F.

Dog Beds



Dogs play hard and rest hard. They typically sleep between 12 and 14 hours a day, while puppies often enjoy up to 20 hours of shut-eye daily. Having a comfy place to nap is a must.

How to Choose a Bed Your Dog Will Love

You'll find a range of unique dog beds with different features. Your dog's preferred sleep position is a good indicator of the best dog bed for them, and there are options designed for certain health conditions, extra cooling and easy cleaning. Consider these options:

- **High-sided dog beds:** This is the best bed for dogs who enjoy curling up. The sides support their back and also act as a comfortable dog pillow.
- **Flat dog mattresses:** Dogs that like to sprawl out will enjoy the freedom of a large dog bed without sides. Does your dog switch it up? Purchase a bed with one or two sides, so your dog can choose whether they want to lean or spread out.
- **Orthopedic dog beds:** Seniors and dogs with joint problems can have trouble getting out of a bed that's too heavily padded. A memory foam dog bed provides them with the comfort and support their bodies need without too much stuffing.
- **Platform dog beds:** If your furry friend has a thick coat, a platform bed is an excellent cooling bed for dogs. It features a PVC or aluminum base with a canvas bed elevated a few inches above the floor, so air can flow underneath and keep your dog cool.

Once you've chosen a dog bed, consider its practicality. Machine washable dog beds or ones with removable covers make it easy to keep your pup's space clean and free of odors. Waterproof outdoor dog beds are also great options for potty-training puppies and outdoor use.

Doghouses



An outdoor **doghouse** is a cozy place for your pup to go for shelter from rain, wind, direct sunlight and snow. Doghouses are great for a backyard or inside a large dog kennel.

How to Find the Right Doghouse

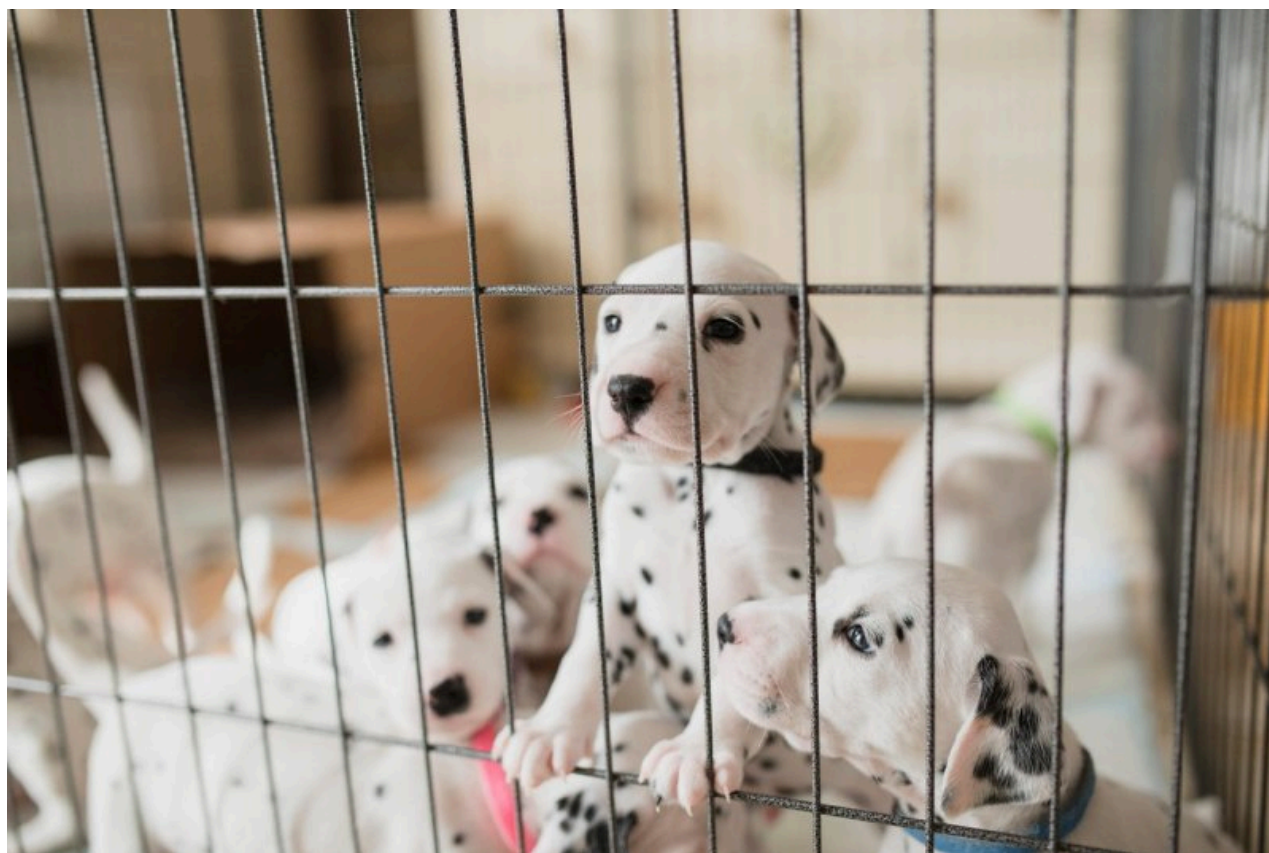
In terms of sizing, follow the same guidelines as choosing a dog crate. Your dog should be able to stand up, turn around and spread out. An elevated doghouse or one with a porch also provides your dog with extra protection from rainwater. Doghouses are typically plastic or wooden.

- **Plastic doghouses** are easy to transport and require little maintenance. Cleaning is easy, especially in models with a detachable roof. Plastic doesn't provide as much natural insulation as wood, so they're ideal for milder climates.
- **Wooden doghouses** have natural insulation that keeps pups cool in hot weather and warm in cold temperatures. They're durable and last a long time if properly maintained. Regularly check for any splintering wood and avoid chemically treated houses. Another benefit of wooden houses? They're stylish – you can even find one to match your own home.

Transform Your Outdoor Doghouse Into a Home

Ensure your dog's comfort by adding a water bowl and toys, incorporating insulation or investing in a heated doghouse for brisk days. Place a heat lamp or heated mat inside and add a door flap to keep wind and rain out. Plush dog bedding gets soggy when exposed to the elements, so consider a water-resistant bed. Sprinkling cedar chips on the floor also helps repel ticks, fleas and other insects.

Playpens for Dogs



Indoor dog kennels, or playpens, give energetic pups space to run and play inside while being confined to a certain area. Using a playpen is a great tool for young puppies as they get acclimated to a new environment or when you don't want your dog to have free rein of the house. Add food, water, toys and a bed or blankets to curl up on.

What to Look For in a Dog Playpen

Indoor dog kennels come in three materials: metal, plastic and wood. Each one does the trick, but a wire frame makes it easiest for dogs to look at their surroundings. Whether you go for a stationary playpen or an easy-to-store collapsible one, make sure the dog pen is stable.

Find a playpen that's at least five times longer than your puppy and provides ample playing space. To keep your pup from climbing out, choose a model that's about twice your puppy's height when it's on its hind legs.

Pet Carriers



Dog carriers and dog travel crates make it easy to travel with your dog. They provide a comforting and familiar space, especially when headed somewhere they might be anxious about, like the vet or groomer. While regular crates are tough to move, carriers have handles for easy transport.

How to Choose the Right Dog Carrier

A couple of quick measurements can help you determine the right size. Measure from the top of your dog's head to the ground and from the tip of the nose to the base of the tail. Add three inches in each direction, and that's the perfect size for your dog travel crate. Next, decide which type of carrier is right for your dog.

- **Hard-sided carriers:** The durability of hard plastic carriers makes them perfect for longer journeys. The feeling of confinement helps to calm nervous dogs, and a foam dog bed on the bottom can add comfort.
- **Soft-sided carriers:** Fabric carriers are light and portable. They're not as sturdy as hard carriers and often have weight limits, but they're excellent for quick trips to the groomer or pet store.
- **Wearable dog carriers:** A backpack or sling keeps your dog snug against your body and leaves your hands free. A wearable carrier works well on walks and hikes when your dog gets tired but still wants to feel involved.
- **Wheeled pet carriers and crates:** Carrying a large dog can be tough, but many older dogs have trouble walking far distances. A wheeled carrier lets you wheel your dog around the park or neighborhood, so they can still get out without expending too much energy.

Now that you know more about the different types of dog housing, you can decide which options are best for your dog. Tractor Supply Company has all you need to create a safe space your dog will love.