

*An Owner's Manual for:*

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# CRATE TRAINING

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*by the*  
AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB



### **ABOUT THIS SERIES**

At the AKC, we know better than anyone that your dog can't be treated like a car or an appliance, but we've named this series "An Owner's Manual" because sometimes you probably wish your lovable companions came with one.

These concise guides give you the tools, tips, and direction to be a responsible and confident dog owner who brings out the best in your dog. Give them a test drive!



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## WHAT IS CRATE TRAINING?

Basically, you're giving your dog a room of his own. By keeping your dog in a crate that is large enough for him to stand up and turn around while you're away or sleeping, you'll help housebreak him and give him a space to feel safe and protected. Plus, you'll fill it with toys and bedding, so he'll feel extra cozy—kind of like a playpen for a baby.



*Golden Retriever/Courtesy Pet Dreams*



### **ISN'T THAT CRUEL?**

Nope! In fact, dogs like crates since they mimic the close quarters of a wolf's den. Also, this practice can help with anxiety issues. Dogs naturally want to protect their space when their humans aren't there to do it for them. But watching over a large home (or even a studio apartment for a little dog) can be overwhelming. When all they have to "guard" is their little room, it becomes more manageable in their little canine minds.



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## OK, YOU'VE SOLD ME.

### HOW DO I SELECT A CRATE?

- It should be big enough for your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down, but not much larger than that.
- If you have a growing puppy, consider a crate that has a removable partition so that the crate space can “grow” with the dog.
- Metal is better than canvas because it's easier to clean up accidents.
- It should be well ventilated.



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## TRAINING FOR THE CRATE

It's necessary to teach your dog to enjoy his crate and to start in small increments of time while you're home.



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### PLAN AHEAD:

The first few days and nights will be rough on your pup as he adjusts to life without mom and his littermates. If you plan ahead, give a blanket or towel to the breeder to keep in the litter before bringing your pup home. That towel—scented with his litter—can go in the crate to help the transition.



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**STEP 1:**

Line the crate with blankets to make it cozy. You can also cover it with a (lightweight) blanket to mimic the “den” environment. Make sure it is still ventilated and not too hot if you do this.





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## STEP 2:

Bring your puppy to the crate for naps and quiet-time breaks for the puppy to “unwind” from family chaos. Start in increments of 10 minutes and work up to longer. Offer treats when he goes inside, and toys (like a stuffed Kong). It’s also helpful to keep puppies in the crate overnight (they may cry the first night or two—don’t be alarmed, they are simply adjusting to home without their mom and littermates).



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### STEP 3:

Every time you take the puppy out of the crate, take him for a walk so he can eliminate. He'll get used to the idea that bathroom time comes after crate time.



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## HOW LONG IS OK?

1 Hour for every month your dog's age is (up to 6 to 8 hours max) (e.g., a four-month-old puppy should not be crated for more than four hours)



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## NO-NO #1

Never leave a puppy in his crate all day; he needs several bathroom breaks and play and feeding times. Even though he won't want to soil his sleeping area, if he is in there for extremely long stretches, he just might. (He can't help it.) And if he does, it is because his owner has neglected his responsibility, not because the dog has misbehaved.



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## NO-NO #2

Never use the crate as punishment.  
Your dog should see his “room” as a place  
where only happy, peaceful things happen.



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THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

### WHO AND WHAT WE ARE:

*The AKC is a not-for-profit organization and the largest purebred dog registry in the world. We are the sports-governing body for over 22,000 dog events a year, including conformation (dog shows) and exciting sports like agility, obedience, rally, tracking, lure coursing, earthdog, herding trials, among others.*



## THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

*But the AKC is so much more! Here are just some of the ways we support and enrich the lives of dogs—purebreds and mixed-breeds alike—and their families. We:*

- Created the [AKC Humane Fund](#), which supports breed rescue activities, assists shelters that permit domestic-abuse victims to bring their pets, and educates dog lovers about responsible dog ownership.
- Offer the [Canine Good Citizen®](#) program: A 10-step test that certifies dogs who have good manners at home and in their community. Over 725,000 dogs across the United States have become Canine Good Citizens, and 42 states have passed resolutions recognizing the program's merit and importance.
- Founded [AKC Reunite](#), which has brought more than 400,000 lost pets back together with their owners.
- Created the [AKC Canine Health Foundation](#), which funds research projects and clinical studies. Since 1995 the AKC has donated over \$24 million to the CHF. (The AKC is the only registry that incorporates health-screening results into its permanent dog records.)
- Conduct thousands of kennel inspections annually to monitor care and conditions at kennels across the country and ensure the integrity of the AKC registry.
- Offer the largest, most comprehensive set of DNA programs for parentage verification and genetic identity to ensure reliable registration records.
- Support one of the world's largest collections of dog-related fine art and artifacts at the [AKC Museum of the Dog](#), and we have the world's largest [dog library](#) at AKC headquarters in New York, both of which are open to the public.



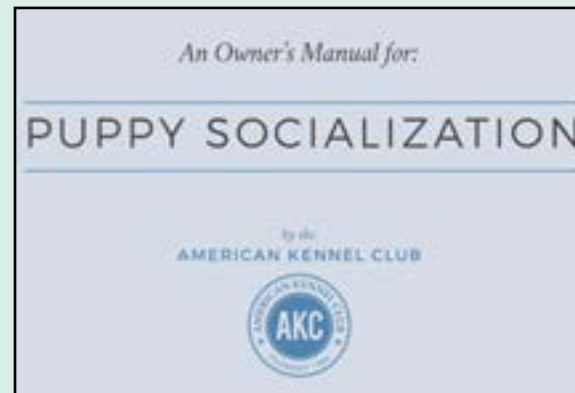
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## THANK YOU FOR READING!

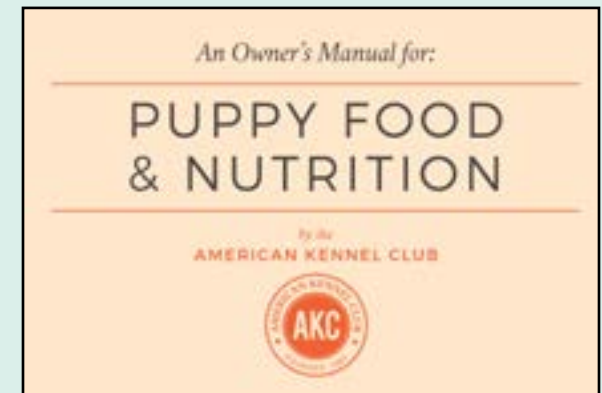
*We hope this information was valuable to you in helping your puppy live a long, healthy, happy life. Below, find additional books in our Owner's Manual series designed to strengthen the bond between you and your furry family member.*



THE FIVE COMMANDS  
EVERY DOG SHOULD KNOW



PUPPY SOCIALIZATION



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