


# How do Danish dog owners use cages for their dogs?

- Is it a potential welfare problem?

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# WHAT'S WRONG WITH CRATING?

There are many misconceptions about crating. For detailed information, visit [PETA.org](https://peta.org).

**A crate will not help your puppy learn to "hold it."**

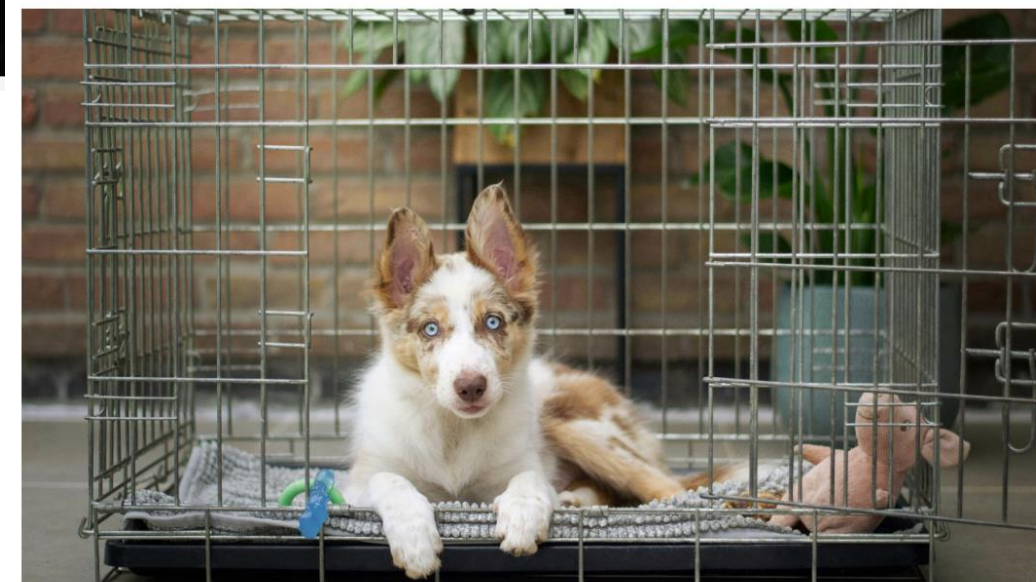
Puppies aren't that different from human babies—they can't "hold it" for their first few months of life, so they need regular and frequent elimination breaks.

**Crates do not promote a feeling of security.**

On the contrary, they often cause separation anxiety, fearfulness, depression, "cage rage," hyperactivity, and other types of behavioral problems.

## The Great Crate Debate

SEPARATION ANXIETY • PUPPY TRAINING • DOG TRAINING AUG 24 • WRITTEN BY MELISSA DALLIER



The American College of  
Veterinary Behaviorists  
Decoding Your Pet

### ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

## The Great Crate Debate: Why It's Okay to Crate Your Pets

Crating your pet is a great way to provide routine or situational management.

Posted June 3, 2022 | Reviewed by Tyler Woods

## The Crate Debate: Should I Crate My Dog?

# Is the use of cages a welfare problem?

- New legislation on the welfare of dogs is coming into force July, 1st
  - Centre of Companion Animal Welfare was asked to give input
- Limitations of tying up dogs
  - Crates were not included
- What is a cage from a welfare perspective?
  - Is it a safe place for the dog and a useful tool for training purposes?
  - A “quick-fix” for behavioural problems like separation anxiety?
  - An unnecessary restriction on the dog's freedom of movement?
  - Or even a violation of animal welfare laws?
- Master project - questionnaire study among Danish dog owners

# What is a cage?

In this study, a cage was defined as a limited area for indoor use and/or transportation, where the dog has limited freedom of movement.

Larger fenced facilities or outdoor runs were not included





# How do Danish dog owners use cages for their dogs?

- Convenience sample – distributed on social media
- A total of 2,463 responses from dog owners who used cages
- A total of 119 responses from owners stating they they did not use cages
- Mainly households with only one dog and ~60% between 1 and 5 year
- Medium sized dogs (10-25 kg) comprised ~ 50% – overrepresentation
- The majority were family dogs with/without combinations
  - Show dog/sports dog/hunting dog/breeding dog
- Nearly one third (29%) had not trained their dog before using the cage

# What were the cages used for?

Most prevalent purposes	Percent (very often/often)
Transportation	77.4
When dog was a puppy, for training	45.6
At dog shows / competitions	40.9
During other training activities	36.1
When left home alone	26.6
The dog sleeps in the crate at night	23.8

# How often and for how long time?

- 48.6% used the cage daily and 18.7% 3-4 times per week
- Weighted average of time spent in the cage was
  - 4.25 hours/day
  - 23.1 days/month
- Only few other studies
- French-Israeli study Bleuer-Elsner & Masson 2024
  - 1,305 dog owners across 23 countries
  - 25.4 % of owners used cages, predominantly for puppies under six months of age
  - 5.4 hours/day
  - 4.9 days/week – equivalent to 19 – 24 days/month

## Dogs which spend more than 8 hours in the cage per day

- Some dogs spend many hours in the cages (234 dogs > 8 hours per day)
  - 9 – 10 hours: 158 dogs
  - 11 – 18 hours: 69 dogs
  - 19 – 24 hours: 7 dogs
- The most prevalent uses were combinations of:
  - The dog sleeps in the cage at night (79.9%)
  - The dogs is in a cage when left home alone (74.8%)
  - The dog is in a cage during transportation (73.1%)



## Owners' perception of the cage

- 80.2% agreed that "The cage is a safe space"
- 58.8% agreed that "The cage offers a quiet place in situations with many other dogs"
- 31.5% agreed that "The cage prevent the dog from damaging the house"
  - Significant correlation between agreement with this statement and the use of a cage for the dog when it was left home alone
- Respondents who do not use cages - free text analysis by ChatGPT – the three largest categories:
  - Do not find it necessary at all
  - Unnecessary restriction on the dog's freedom of movement – animal cruelty
  - Use of alternative solutions (seat belt in the car, separate room in the house)

## Behaviour in the cage according to owners

- Sleeping: 91.4%
- Lying down, relaxing: 89.0%
- Tail wagging: 48.8%
- Playing with toys/chewing sticks etc.: 29.1%
- Waits calmly when the cage is opened: 50.6%
- Barking/howling: 7.0%
- Bites/scratches the cage: 2.9%



## Conclusion and further studies

- Is the use of cages for dogs a welfare problem?
  - The short answer is: We still don't know
- But we have gained some important, new knowledge
  - The polarized views were confirmed – list of arguments for and against
  - Nearly half of the respondents used the cage daily – and some for many hours
  - Gained an impression of the most prevalent purposes
  - 26.6% indicate that they place their dog in a cage when left home alone
- Need for additional studies, including observational
  - Master student gathering video recordings of dogs left alone in a cage (from owners)
  - Planned a representative survey on the use of cages
- Hopefully, we will be able to present some evidence-based recommendations for authorities as well as dog owners





**Thank you**

**The Danish Kennel Club  
Animal protection Denmark  
All the dog owners**

