

Greyhounds: Indoor Kennel & Crate Training

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What is an indoor kennel?

An indoor kennel, sometimes referred to as a crate, is a safe place for your dog to rest and sleep. It takes the place of your dog's bed and must be introduced carefully to your dog so that he creates good associations with his crate, and does not feel anxious about going in to it.

Choosing a suitable indoor kennel

Indoor kennels come in different shapes and sizes; the most common type is a collapsible metal cage with a plastic base and one or two doors on the side and/or end.

Whatever type of indoor kennel you choose, it should be big enough to accommodate food, a water bowl, toys and chews as well as some comfortable bedding for your dog to sleep on. It should also be big enough for your dog to stand up, sit, turn around in and lay flat on his side with his legs stretched out, without being cramped.

Why use an indoor kennel?

An indoor kennel can be used as a safe place for your dog to retreat to when he is feeling worried or needs his own space. It should be a place where he can rest without being disturbed – with the door remaining permanently open. It can also be used as an aid for training purposes, such as house training, or for a dog that likes to destroy and chew inappropriate things.

It is not cruel to use an indoor kennel and they are a useful training aid as long as the dog is not confined to the kennel for long periods of time. However, leaving your dog in the indoor kennel for prolonged periods of time can become a serious welfare issue and is not recommended.

Where to locate an indoor kennel

Dogs are social animals and as such will not like using an indoor kennel that is isolated and away from everyone and everything in the home. It is best to put the kennel in a part of your home where you

spend a lot of time so that your dog does not feel left out or begin to dislike his kennel.

Training your dog to use an indoor kennel

It is important that you get your dog used to his kennel very gradually and that you make sure the kennel is associated with all the things your dog likes such as toys, games, chews, food and treats. This means that your dog will associate the kennel as the place where good things happen and he will want to go in as it is a fun place to be.

If you force your dog into the kennel, he is more likely to become afraid of it and will not want to go in it again. Take your time with training your dog to use the indoor kennel and you will find that your dog will willingly enter the kennel when he needs to rest.

To begin your training, make sure your dog's bedding is in the kennel and you have a range of tasty treats.

1. Place some treats inside the kennel to encourage your dog inside. Make this fun and like a game, tossing treats into the kennel as your dog approaches it. Practise at least 6 times a day and do not close the door.
2. When your dog readily goes into the kennel you can start feeding your dog his meals inside it. Do not close the door yet.
3. Place a toy and/or a chew toy in the kennel and whenever your dog goes into the kennel, praise him and give him a treat.
4. When your dog is visibly relaxed in the kennel, close the door for a few moments (5-10 seconds) and then open it again.
5. Gradually increase the amount of time you can shut the door, with you present, slowly building up to minutes.
6. Once your dog is happy with being in his kennel



with the door closed and you present, you can then practise leaving the room for very short periods of time and then returning.

7. Gradually increase the amount of time you can leave the room, building up to minutes and hours, before leaving your dog for the first time.

When to use an indoor kennel

An indoor kennel can help keep your dog safe for short periods of time when you are not able to give him your full attention. Examples include:

- If you are cooking or are busy around the house, your dog can be kept safe in the kennel
- When travelling by car, a crate can provide a safe resting place
- If you have an older dog and a new puppy, and you cannot pay attention to playtime, the kennel can provide a safe, calm place for your older dog to be.
- During house-training



You must always make sure that your dog has access to an adequate supply of water whilst he is in his kennel.

When NOT to use an indoor kennel

A dog should not be confined to an indoor kennel for extended periods of time, as this can have a serious impact on your dog's welfare.

Do not send your dog to the indoor kennel as a punishment, as this may cause him to resent the kennel and lead to behavioural problems; an indoor kennel should always be a positive, safe place for your dog to rest. It should not become the equivalent of solitary confinement in jail!

If your dog is afraid of loud noises such as fireworks or thunderstorms, do not shut him in an indoor kennel when these loud noises are present. He is likely to

panic and try to escape which may result in him injuring himself.

What if your dog barks when he is in the indoor kennel?

If your dog barks whilst he is in his kennel, you may have jumped too far ahead with the time you leave him unattended. Go back to your training and gradually increase the amount of time he can be left alone. It's often helpful to keep notes of the time he can be left alone, noting down the time in increments of 30 seconds or so.

If your dog has been used to the kennel and suddenly starts barking, it may be that he is bored, frustrated or has learned that barking will get your attention. You can help alleviate boredom and frustration by leaving your dog with a food puzzle to occupy him. If he has learned to bark for attention, you must ignore the barking and only let him out when he is calm. Wait for at least five seconds of quiet and no barks before you let him out. As dogs learn by association, if you let him out when he barks you will teach him that barking gets your attention and results in him being let out of the kennel.

What if your dog soils in the indoor kennel?

It may be that the kennel is too large, or your dog could not hold his bladder or bowels any longer. Make sure you do not punish your dog for eliminating in the kennel and go back to ensuring he eliminates before being shut in the kennel. It is also advisable to reduce the amount of time your dog is left alone in his kennel with the door shut.

What if your dog tries to escape from the indoor kennel?

If your dog shows any signs of trying to escape from the kennel, increased destructiveness or anxiety whilst in the kennel, stop using the kennel immediately.

An indoor kennel can be a safe place for your dog to retreat to if he feels worried and needs his own space. It can also be used as a training aid for your greyhound.



For further information or guidance please contact:

- **Retired Greyhound Trust Welfare Helpline**
020 8335 3016
(open M-F 10-11am)
- **Local Retired Greyhound Trust Branches**
www.retiredgreyhounds.co.uk/branches
- **Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors**
www.apbc.org.uk
- **The Association of Pet Dog Trainers**
www.apdt.co.uk



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