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Selecting Dog Crates Isn't Difficult When You Ask The Right Questions

By Teresa James

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Differences Between Pet Containment Systems

If this is the first time you're shopping for dog crates you may find it a little complicated. You may have noticed already that the use of the word kennel can be somewhat confusing. So before making a final selection it's a good idea to learn about the differences between some pet containment systems. Equipped with this information you'll be ready to choose the best crate for your dog.

How Can I Tell The Difference Between Dog Crates, Dog Kennels & Pet Carriers If They're All Called Kennels?

A "kennel" is a very general term meaning a place where dogs are bred or kept. By its very definition it can be used to describe a broad range of pet containment products such as pet carriers, dog crates, pet exercise pens and outdoor pet kennels.

For example, a wire kennel and a hard plastic kennel sound very similar because both are called kennels. In some ways they are very different. Depending on how you plan to use it there are certain features that you'll need it to have. This is why it's very important to focus on the features that you need. Only after carefully reviewing the features of a specific model can you be certain that it will adequately fulfill all your needs.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

A wire dog crate or kennel is designed to safely contain your pet. But, it's not designed to be picked up and moved around with your pet inside it. Although available in soft-side models, soft crates are usually not referred to as kennels.

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A hard plastic carrier or kennel is designed so that your dog can safely travel inside the carrier. Pet carriers also come in soft-side models. Soft pet carriers are not usually referred to as kennels.

Some hard plastic pet carriers make ideal dog crates, but a dog crate is usually not a good substitute for a hard pet carrier.

What Are Some Of The Basic Features of Dog Crates & Pet Carriers

Wire Dog Crates / Kennels Used for crate training, housing breaking and as an everyday crate Many models are available with divider panels for growing puppies Can be used to contain your pet in a vehicle Available in collapsible or folding models Not approved for airline travel Offers the most visibility and ventilation – well suited for heavy-coated dogs

Soft Dog Crates & Tents Soft crates & tents are light weight, portable, easy to set up & take down Can be used as an everyday crate Not approved for airline travel Pet must be well crate trained Not

for diggers, chewers, aggressive dogs or dogs that experience anxiety while crated

Hard Plastic Pet Carriers / Kennels Hard plastic pet carriers are used to carry and transport pets Some models can be used as an everyday crate Many are approved for airline travel Not recommended for growing puppies since they don't come with divider panels Can be used to contain your pet in a vehicle Available in collapsible models

Soft Pet Carrier Bags (for pets under 25lbs) Soft pet carriers are designed to safely transport a small dog Can be used to contain your pet in a vehicle A soft pet carrier should not be used as a dog crate Many are approved for airline travel and some can be taken in the cabin if the carrier fits under the seat in front of you.

What Questions Should I Consider Before Selecting A Dog Crate?

Before you shop for a dog crate, take some time to consider how you're going to use it. This will help you get the most out of your investment. The type you choose will depend on your lifestyle, your dog's behavioral patterns and what type of activities you plan to do with your pet. We've provided the questions below to get you thinking about the many different ways that pet crates can be used.

Is this crate for home use only? If you're not planning on traveling with your dog a basic wire crate is a good choice for an everyday crate. If you're going to keep it in one place you probably don't need a collapsible model.

Are you buying a crate for a puppy? If you have a growing puppy select a crate that your puppy will grow into. Make sure it comes with a divider panel, which will allow you to adjust the size of the crate as your puppy grows.

Do you take your dog in your car? It's highly recommended that you crate your dog while traveling by car. You may be able to purchase a crate that you can use at home as well as in your car. Or if you

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take your dog in the car frequently purchasing a separate crate for your car may be best. Either way you may want to consider a folding crate, which is much easier to move around once it is folded up. Even if your dog is not crate trained use still may want to consider crating your pet while in a vehicle.

If there's any chance that your dog can accidentally get out of your car in a strange and dangerous place that's a good enough reason to invest in a crate. Crating your pet while you're driving will also prevent any mishaps that could result from your dog being left loose in your vehicle.

Are you planning on taking your dog on an airplane? You will need a hard plastic airline–approved pet carrier. For small dogs you might be able to use an airline–approved soft pet carrier bag. Wire dog crates are not approved for airline travel. If you travel frequently by plane you may want to look for a hard plastic dog carrier that you can also use as an everyday dog crate.

Do you need a crate that is portable and collapsible? If you plan on moving your dog crate around a collapsible model is a good option. A collapsible model should come with convenient carrying handles. There are also some collapsible hard plastic carriers that can also serve as everyday dog crates.

Do you take your dog hiking or camping? You will certainly want to consider a collapsible soft crate or tent. They are designed to be portable, lightweight and very easy to set up and take down.

A warning about soft crates, tents and pet carriers: - If your dog is aggressive, chews, digs or experiences anxiety when crated these are not for you.

As you can see, choosing the right dog carrier depends on your dog's size and temperament, the intended location and use, and the function and features that you expect the carrier to fulfill. Choose the dog carrier, kennel, or dog crate that best suits your needs and how you see the crate functioning. You'll want to pick the one that offers the most convenience for the uses that you have in mind.

Related Articles:

[Responsible crate training resources plus four great reasons to crate train your dog.](#)

[How to measure for a dog crate and select the proper size crate for use at home, for traveling or for crate training your puppy.](#)

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Teresa James is the Webmaster of

a site dedicated to providing dog

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Using A Dog Crate

By Barbara Anderson

A dog crate gives your dog a special place of its own within your home.

One of the many dog crates on the market could be the best friend you and your pet will ever have. While it may seem like a sort of "cage" to you and I, your animal will regard it as his own personal, indoor, dog house — a security blanket of sorts, where he can go to sleep or escape. Travel models have the added advantage of providing the comfort of home for your animal while in different or strange surroundings.

Crates come in many different shapes, styles, and sizes. A general rule of thumb about dog crates is that they should only be big enough for your pet to stand, turn around, and lie down easily in. Ideally, it should be just large enough for the animal to sleep on its side, with its legs stretched out. When buying a travel model, measure your vehicle first to make sure it will fit, or you could be in for a nasty surprise!

So how much do dog crates cost?

You can expect to pay in the range of \$50–\$125 for a quality model for medium to large-sized animals. While this might seem a bit steep, keep in mind that it will most likely last your pet's entire life, and even beyond. Properly used, they can provide true happiness for both owner and pet, and the initial cost will soon be forgotten.

This can be a difficult purchase for those with growing puppies. If it's within your budget, you might want to check out the crates that include dividers, so your new crate can grow along with your puppy as time goes on.

For the largest selection, and often the best price, your best bet may be some of the bigger pet retailers on the internet. You'll find various materials, styles, and prices. Some are sturdier. Some are more convenient than others. No matter which way you go, dog crates can go a long way to providing a "home within a home" for your pet.

Barbara Anderson writes articles for several Internet magazines, including

and

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