

# Rescue dog crate-training plan

Trust first. A gentle introduction for adult and older rescue dogs.

Dog: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Helper: \_\_\_\_\_

**01 Learn this dog's starting point** - Ask the rescue or foster about confinement experience, but watch your dog rather than assuming they know a crate. Choose a quiet family area. Give room to stand, turn, lie on their side and stretch; provide water and safe bedding.

**02 Begin with an open door** - Secure the door open and reward looking at, approaching or voluntarily entering the crate. Allow an easy exit. Place meals only as close as your dog can comfortably eat. Never lure them in and suddenly trap them.

**03 Build comfort before closure** - Look for a loose body, willing entries and relaxed resting. Once comfortable, move the door a little and reopen. Progress to a brief latch while sitting beside the crate. Open before anxiety rises and repeat easier steps when needed.

**04 Separate time from distance** - Add a few comfortable seconds before trying distance. Later take a step away, then return; only progress to out-of-sight practice when your dog stays relaxed. Keep sessions short. No adoption or training deadline determines readiness.

**05 Plan life outside training** - Remove collars and harnesses before crating. Offer toilet breaks, exercise, social time and age-appropriate rest. Only leave after calm practice at the planned duration; start absences very short and monitor. For seniors, consider mobility, pain and extra toilet needs.

**06 Use another option if needed** - Heavy drooling, stress panting, repeated escape attempts, sustained barking or inability to settle mean the plan needs changing. End safely, avoid reaching into a frightened dog's space, and contact your vet or a qualified behavior professional. Try a safe room, pen or sitter if comfortable for your dog.

**Always remember:** The crate is never punishment or a cure for separation anxiety. Do not force a panicking dog to stay inside. Test toys and bedding under supervision; remove anything chewed or swallowed. Keep fresh water available. Use a pen or safe room if appropriate.

**Practice log** | Repeat comfortable steps; shorten the session if worry appears.

| Date / time | Door closed / distance | Relaxed signs / concerns | Next easy step |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
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Sources: [Cornell Veterinary Medicine - crate choice and distress](#) | [Dogs Trust - gradual crate and pen training](#) | [Wisconsin Humane Society - crate training](#)

General training guidance. Read the full guides and safety notes at [Dog Days Training & Printouts](#).