

Create a safe place for your puppy

Establishing a safe area for your puppy within your home is essential. Especially when very young, a puppy requires constant monitoring to ensure his safety and wellbeing. A puppy is basically a toddler. An unsupervised puppy will put anything and everything in his mouth, wander into unsafe areas and generally get himself into all kinds of trouble as he explores and investigates his new world. When you are not able to provide direct supervision, when daily life needs your attention (making dinner, helping the kids with homework, showering, etc.) your puppy needs to be in a safe area like this:



Additional designs, configurations and ideas can be found on Google, Pinterest and other platforms/applications.

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Create a temporary “playpen” for your puppy

What you will need:

- An exercise pen (minimum height 30 inches). A panel design with one horizontal bar is suggested. Multiple horizontal bars can create a “ladder” for a climbing puppy.
- A 24 x 36 wire crate with a divider (the divider lets you adjust the size of the crate space as puppy grows). The crate can be attached to the pen initially or used separately- especially as your puppy grows.
- If you plan to attach the crate to the pen, zip ties (secured and trimmed to prevent puppy chewing) are an easy and flexible way to anchor the crate to the pen. Snap bolts or heavy-duty clamps would work as well. Always monitor the pen area for signs of tamper- chewing on any plastic zip tie, etc. Inspect every day or twice a day.

Make your puppy’s playpen an inviting and positive space.

- Provide safe toys and chews for Puppy to play with in the pen.
- Provide comfy bedding in the crate. Monitor to make sure Puppy does not chew or eat bedding.
- Feed Puppy his meals in the pen, always give him a treat when you put him in the pen.
- Make sure Puppy has had attention, stimulation/age-appropriate exercise, and the chance to pee and poop outside BEFORE putting him in the pen.

For the very young puppy, consider providing indoor potty in the pen- pee pads, paper, artificial turf, pellets, etc. Puppies, especially under the age of 16 weeks need the chance to pee and poop frequently.

Expect some initial complaints from your puppy.

When Puppy is first introduced to the playpen he may complain. Just as a human toddler may cry and whine when put in a playpen, so will a puppy toddler.

DO make sure that Puppy is okay if he cries. Check to see if all is well. Make sure all toys and objects in the pen are completely safe and do not pose a hazard to Puppy. Check to see if he is trapped or tangled in something. Check to make sure he is not in distress.

DO NOT give in to Puppy’s crying and whining. Do not remove Puppy from the pen just because he does not want to be there. You have a life to live and your puppy is part of it. Sometimes he needs to be in the safe pen when you cannot provide direct supervision.

DO NOT leave Puppy in the pen for long periods of time. Puppy should only be in the pen when he has been played with/exercised and had ample opportunity to pee and poop outdoors. Keep initial and most times in the pen short while Puppy is young.

DO consider the playpen a transitional space for Puppy as he grows, the pen will become a familiar space. Once he is older and “house broken”- regularly peeing and pooping outdoors, the pen can continue to be used as a safe and familiar place for the young dog.