

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

00:00:10

SG Hey, everybody. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. I am Susan Garrett, and today this topic is probably one of my favourite things to train a dog to do. And it's probably a topic that many of you are going to say, "I don't want to listen to this." and you're going to turn off. I'm just going to ask you this. If you love your dog, if you really, really love your dog, at least please listen with an open mind. Listen at the very minimum. "Okay, Susan, I'm going to listen to this just cause, I absolutely truly love my dog."

00:00:45

I'm talking about comfort with confinement. Comfort with confinement. I'm talking about crate training a dog, and it came from a letter from one of my online students. And she wrote, "Please help. We have had our new puppy born July 1st for two weeks now. He does not have a crate but sleeps in the bed in the kitchen. This has just worked out fine for the first week. He was happy in his bed, not crying at night, just happy to sleep after playing, but now he's become destructive and he takes every opportunity to go at something when I'm not around."

00:01:23

So, common and guess why he's doing it. Because he's a dog, that's why. They explore with their mouths. And, they're just, you know, exploring their environment. That's what baby puppies do for sure. Okay, redundant, baby puppies, I can't believe I said that. It drives me cray-cray. Alright. This podcast is going to be about the who, what, where, why and how of crates. And remember our deal, "Susan, I love my dog so I'm going to listen to this."

00:01:53

I'm going to start off with the why. Why should I care about crate training my dogs? Now, if you don't know, I have a program called **Crate Games**. Which you can buy as a [DVD](#) or an [online program](#). And it is a program that makes a dog love their crate, like go cray-cray for a crate.

00:02:20

So why, why would you care? Let's take it the opposite. Why would people tell me, "I don't want to crate my dog."? Number one is: "I love my dog. I don't want to do that to him." That's the number one that I hear. Number two: "my dog's too big." Number three: "my dog's too small. I can take, I don't really need that crate. I can just take them anywhere." Or the last one that I hear occasionally, not as much as the first three is, "Yeah, my dog's pretty good. He doesn't need a crate. And, uh, you know, he just hangs out around the house. So, I don't, I don't really need to crate train him."

00:02:51

Here's my list of reasons why, if you love your dog, you will invest the time to have him love confinement of a crate. You might go to a hotel and take your dog. You're going to say, "No Susan, my dog stays at home." Look at how many people right now are being evacuated from their homes or maybe you have to be hospitalized and your dog needs to go and live somewhere else. It's, there's a safety for travel. If you're traveling with your dog in a car, please, please, please, all it takes is you just tapping the brakes and your dog could get seriously injured when they're traveling loose.



# Why Dog Crates Are Not Dog Cages

00:03:32

So, there's the safety factor. So, there's, if you happen to go to a hotel, if you happen to be evacuated or have to go somewhere suddenly that you weren't planning on it, safety for cars, like just think about it. I've got a litter of puppies downstairs. They're four weeks old. They've been raised in a little box and now as they get older, they're into a larger box. It's a crate, they're called [Rover panels](#). They're amazing. And occasionally we go downstairs to a larger— but they're always in an enclosure. Why? Why don't I just let them rip around the house?

00:04:05

Well, Susan, that'd be crazy. They're just wee baby puppies. Redundancy again. Don't call them baby puppies. Puppies implies baby. Okay. Of course, it's safety. They could fall down the stairs. They could, um, you know, get in a scuffle with one of my other dogs. They could ingest something that shouldn't, you know, it's just, they could get too cold. It's just safe. So where, if you agree that my puppies that are four weeks old should be in a confinement, where's the line where they shouldn't be in a confinement anymore? Like what is that, ding, ding, ding you're of age now, be open, be free? I don't think there really is one.

00:04:40

There's the things that may happen. But what about the thing that's probably going to happen at some point in your dog's life, they're going to have an overnight stay in a veterinarian. It could be that they have a spay or a neuter. It could be that they have a dentistry as they get older. It could be that or young, young dogs get dentistry's, a teeth, well teeth, tooth cleaning. You're probably not going to be overnight. It could be that they get sick, they just get sick. It could be that you are going away for the weekend. You have to board your dog. And so, they have to be confined into a crate or a run.

00:05:15

And it's very likely your dog's going to need an overnight stay at a veterinarian because you don't want to crate your dog. And because you don't want to crate your dog, you have exponentially increased the chance of your dog getting pancreatitis because he raided the garbage and got into something. He, you know, I just threw out last night's leftover birthday cake and he ate it all. Or he got a foreign body because he was, you know, into something he shouldn't have, or maybe he got a scuffle, with another dog in the house because they were left alone and we don't believe in confinement.

00:05:52

So, the chances of your dog requiring an overnight stay at a veterinarian is actually a lot higher than my dogs, because I am all for crate training my dogs obviously, because I invented the game. Right. So, veterinarian, "So what Susan? My dog has to go to veterinary and what's a big deal?" Do you realize the unbelievable anxiety you cause a dog, a sick dog, a dog that's going in for surgery when it is never learned to enjoy being confined?

00:06:25

You are, you are causing such grief. Unnecessary angst and stress to that dog. So, if for no other reason you should crate train your dog. Even if you never want to use it around your house, you should crate train your dog and revisit. I'm not saying you should, you know, do it the way I do it, but obviously if you want to do it fast and effectively in a way that's a lot of fun for your dog, definitely yes, join [Crate Games](#). But it creates a dog that loves to be in his crate. And you may find if you have a crate just open around the house, that the dog will choose to go in there on their own.



# Why Dog Crates Are Not Dog Cages

00:07:04

Once you've created value that they love it. But then, when the time comes that your dog has to go to the veterinarian, they can be a lot more comfortable there because they're like, "Yeah. My mom, I'm chill with this. My mom, she crates me and I'm good with this." And the other guy's going, "I don't know what's going on. I don't know what—" Your dog's going, "Dude what's your deal? Did your mom never crate train you?" "I don't know what a crate is! What's going on?" You don't want that to be your dog, do you? That's unnecessary stress and angst.

00:07:36

We love our dogs. We would never put our dogs in a position where they're going to have to deal with unnecessary stress. Well, make them comfortable with, not just comfortable, invest the time and have them love that crate. I remember one time my mother called me up. She said, I need a new veterinarian. And I said, okay.

00:07:56

And I knew all the veterinarians at the time in Southern Ontario because my job was to visit vet clinics for a living. I loved it. It was, you know, if this wasn't the best job ever, that was like, at least the second best. And she said, I need the name of the new veterinarian. And I said, well, what's the problem, you know, was there a prob— because she just had her dog spayed that day.

00:08:16

Yeah. She came home and she just drank and drank and drank and drank and drank. She like, I don't think they offered her any water the whole time she was there. I said, yeah, that's unlikely. You know what's more likely is that your dog barked her freaking head off and cried and stress panted, and her eyes were bugging out because she's not used to being confined. Cause she's your little baby and you don't ever want to put her in a little crate. Well, now she's stressed out of her mind and she's just going to be panting, "ho ho ho ho ho ho". Do you like that imitation of a stressed dog? I could do better. I'll do better next time.

00:08:50

Unnecessary stress and angst that you've created because you did not invest the time in crate training your dog. All right. So, that's the why, that's the why it's safe. Now I didn't even touch on the fact, if you have a new puppy or a rescue dog you are astronomically increasing the chances of your dog misbehaving if you don't put them in a crate. And so, what that does is it increases your disappointment. It increases your frustration.

00:09:19

Even if you don't say anything to your dogs, you come home, your \$3,000 sofa is shred all over your living room. And you're like, "No, I love this dog. So, it's okay. I can replace it. I wouldn't say anything to him." Your dog can sense that stress. Trust me, dogs can sense our feelings. And so, you're going to be disappointed and frustrated and your dog's going to feel it. And it's going to hurt your relationship and your dog's going to be confused, "I'm so happy. You're home. What do you mean you're upset? With what? Well, I don't know who did that? I don't know." Please, please, please. Please do not say he knows it I can tell by the way he looks. That's uh, that's, that's another podcast altogether. But let me just say, you're wrong.



# Why Dog Crates Are Not Dog Cages

00:10:06

Dogs don't know it. Sorry. That's not true. Okay. So, we have this puppy or a rescue dog. And if you don't want to crate them, then your disappointment frustration goes up. Your dog's confusion is going to go up and the destruction, your home is going to go up. And you're likely going to have a heck of a time potty training that dog to go to the bathroom where you want them to, rather than your house somewhere.

00:10:32

And even if you don't catch it, they could get sneaky, "Yeah. She doesn't like it when I pee, when she sees me pee." They— you might think, "Oh, I caught him in the act. So, he knows that I don't like that. He's not supposed to pee in the house." He may have learned, "uh, she doesn't like it when she sees me peeing in the house. That's weird. Maybe she-- Okay. She wants, she wants me to have some privacy. I'll just wait till she's not looking and go somewhere off in a corner where she can't see me." It's you know, when you get upset, when a dog has a mistake in the house, that could be what they're learning.

00:11:03

All right. So, we've got the why. I hope I've convinced you of all the reasons why there is no way on earth I would not crate train any dog. Let me put an asterix. \*There are dogs that I would not crate train right away. And those are dogs who have separation anxiety. I would definitely work on the process of Crate Games, but I would not lock a dog who has separation anxiety in a crate. Separation anxiety is a serious, serious thing.

00:11:31

And that dog will always be upset and there's ways we can overcome it. Crate Games is a great way to overcome it, but I would never close the door and lock the door. Because my goal is that my dog loves the crate and I don't buy into the philosophy, 'I'll just stick them in there and let them bark for a couple hours. He'll get over it.' No. Oh no. We love dogs. We don't do that. We create games that they enjoy. I'll get to that. I'll get to, you know, how to transition from Crate Games to the dog staying for an extended period of time. Okay.

00:12:03

So then there's the what, what kind of crate do I use? Well, there's a standard wire crate and plastic crate. Let me just preface this by, I got them all. I've got them all. I have a collection. So, wire crate I use like in the, when it's hotter out and I want an airflow. A plastic crate, my dogs tend to like better because this is a hallucination on my part. I don't know why. I am not in my dog's head. I don't know what they're thinking, but my observation is they prefer those crates, they choose them more often, um, possibly it's because it's more den, like the, the bottom of those plastic crates, there's no, no one can see in. So, I don't know why they like it, but my dogs choose those more often.

00:12:51

Now there's other things like soft sided crates. Those are great but please don't ever put a dog who isn't a hundred percent crate trained in there because I promise you there's something bad going to happen. Something bad is going to happen to that soft sided crate. It will be rearranged. It might not be the first time they're in there, but at some point, something bad is going to happen. Ornate crates - I've got some really nice ornate crates that are wicker crates that are more, you know, something piece of furniture.



00:13:18

You could get [built in crates](#). I love my built-in crates because I want my dogs to have access to crates anytime they want, but I don't necessarily think they match my decoration theme in the house. So, a friend of mine has got these beautiful built in crates. So, you can get really, really nice crates, but they're still very, very functional.

00:13:39

So how do I make my decision on what crate? In the house I'm looking for fashion, I'm looking for it to blend in and I'm looking for it to be comfortable to my dogs. Those are my big things. Looking good and being comfortable. Comfort number one for my dogs and looking good. So how much room do my dogs need?

00:14:00

Well, when they're wee puppies the crate is only as big as the puppy is, right? Because if you give a puppy too much room, they're going to learn to potty at one end and sleep at the other. And so, you know, you can go to a second-hand thrift store and get used crates just disinfect them. If, you know, you can't afford to keep buying crates cause your dog keeps growing, but definitely buy one that just fits the dog at the size they are now. And then either donate it to a rescue association or go to a thrift store and trade it in and get another one. So, the what is at home, I want something that looks good and it's comfortable to my dogs.

00:14:36

When I'm traveling, a car crate or an airline travel, I'm all about number one, safety for my dogs. Safety and comfort. So, you can go to, I believe it's either Subaru or Volvo that did crash testing on dog crates. And one that came out on top is the [Gunner crate](#), which is my preferred choice for a crate for my dogs when we travel. Okay. So, we've got the what. Now where. Where do I put this crate? For me, and ideally for you, it's where you live.

00:15:13

For me one of these puppies downstairs is going to be my puppy and I will have a crate or a confinement. So, for me, I use a, what's called a gated community. What I call a gated community, which is a crate with an ExPen around it. So, when I can supervise it, the puppy has more room to roam around. And there'll be one here in my office where I spend a lot of time working on the computer.

00:15:35

There'll be one in the kitchen so they can get to all the hubbub. And again, it'll be an ExPen. I will use my beautiful Rover panels and just build these little confinements around my house. I use a crate alone in the bedroom because I just go in there. I don't spend any time in there. I might, I might read and then there'll be an ExPen for the puppy in there.

00:15:54

My office, bedroom, and if you watch TV, you'd want to crate in there too. It's all part of training. You want the dog to be where you are, and you want them to learn to be without you as well. Where you don't want to do, I've heard people who get their new puppies or the rescue dogs and they put them in the garage because they bark or they put them in the basement. Oh, nay-nay. They're pack animals. They bond to humans. They want to be with us.





# Why Dog Crates Are Not Dog Cages

00:16:21

Now, as my dogs grow up, I mean, by the time they're nine months or a year old, they're sleeping loose, they can choose to be anywhere they want in the house. So, I have two dogs who like to sleep in the bedroom with me. I have one dog who chooses to be here in the built-in crates. And I have one dog who chooses to sleep by the front door. That's okay.

00:16:44

I know any one of those dogs, if I had to lock them in a crate, they would be a hundred percent okay. If I had you go to a veterinarian and have them stay overnight, they would be a hundred percent— Well, they would still miss me and I would still miss them, but they would be far, far more comfortable because of all of the time and the investment I made in making sure they loved Crate Games or loved being in their crate. And so, as my dog grows up like this new puppy, I'm going to be very intentional about everyday spending time away from the crate.

00:17:16

I'm actually going to have her go out into the building and spend a little bit of time by herself in the building so that she does learn that, you know what, I'm not always going to be within earshot of you. I will learn to be away from me, but you, you don't want to do that if the dog gets anxious about it. So, we've done the why, we've done the what, we've done the where.

00:17:34

How long, how long does my dog have to be in a crate? And how long should I allow the dog to stay in a crate? I believe most puppies can sleep through the night without having to get up so they can stay in that crate all night long. Now there will be exceptions and they will let you know, go back to [Episode number 26](#) where I talk about how to get your puppy to sleep through the night and that's a given.

00:18:00

So how long? Sleeps through the night, during the day I would want a puppy in a crate no more than three to four hours. So, if you work, you would have a neighbor come in or a dog walker to take your puppy or your dog out to exercise them and then they can go back in the crate for another three or four hours.

00:18:15

Certainly, because they can sleep through the night. They can go longer. Ideally, you're having somebody come out and give them some engagement because again, dogs are social creatures. And how long do I have to? "I don't really want a crate hanging around my house. How long do I have to?" I would invest a year. A year so that then if you've had that dog in, in and out of a crate throughout the year, you will know if heaven forbid there was a time you ever had to confine the dog in a hotel or at a vet clinic that then your dog should be okay with that. If you've put in the work for that first year.

00:18:51

So last is who. Who can go into crate? Any age dog, you can start in building enjoy for crate using crate games right now with any age dog. The key is don't be in a hurry to close the door. We want the dog to want to be in that crate. So, throwing cookies in is not the way to do it. We have strategically layered games that makes the dog want to be in that crate.



00:19:19

Now, if you've played Crate Games and your dog still is not happy, it could be you went from, 'okay, here's a crate and you love being in there and everything's good' to 'now I want you to stay in there for four hours without me.' So, what you need to do is get them in the crate and maybe walk around the crate and then let them out. And that might be your first session. Once you've done all the layers of Crate Games I mean. And then it might be you step out of the room and then quickly before they get the chance to get anxious, you come back in and you'd let them out and that's it.

00:19:47

And you build up to, they can be, you know, in the kitchen and you're going to walk into the bathroom and come back out. And gradually you're going to build up so instead of it just being seconds that they're locked in the crate, it's going to be minutes or maybe an hour. And then, you know, it's time to step out and go to the store and you can leave them there and they're going to be happy.

00:20:07

I think once you've got a dog that's happy to be there for an hour, you want to work at them being there in that crate for an hour with you in the house because a lot of dogs get a little bit upset with that. In the meantime, you're going to have to have somebody come and babysit your dog. I mean, otherwise they're going to go cray-cray. They're going to be barking and scratching and going cray-cray if they're anxious in their crate. It's possible to have a dog who loves her crate. Every dog I've ever owned, loved their crate. And every dog I own today still loves their crate.

00:20:37

It's possible because I conditioned it. A crate is their special place and they love it. That is the who, what, where, why and how of crates. I hope I've convinced each and every one of you, that it is a valuable training tool that you do not want to be without. That's it for Shaped by Dog. I'll see you next time.

### Resources:

[Rover Modular Pet Enclosures](#)

[Crate Games Online](#)

[Video Blog: Built In Dog Crates for Home Décor](#)

[Gunner Crate Crash Test](#)

[Blog Post: All About Dogs Sleeping in the Bedroom](#)

[Podcast Episode 26: Pro Dog Training Tips to Get Your Puppy to Sleep All Night](#)

[Blog Post: A Day in the Life of a Susan Garrett Puppy](#)



### About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with every dog she has ever owned over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago. Susan has helped hundreds of thousands of people enjoy a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.



A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.

Susan is now helping many thousands of dog owners in 82 countries have the best relationship possible with their dogs. The real joy for her comes from bringing confidence to dogs and their owner through playful interactions and relationship building games that are grounded firmly in the science of how animals learn.



### Meet Us Online

- Website <https://dogsthat.com>
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/SusanGarrettDogAgility/>
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/SusanGarrettDogsThat/>
- TikTok <https://www.tiktok.com/@dogsthat>
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/dogsthat>
- Pinterest <https://pinterest.ca/dogsthatcom/>
- Twitter <https://twitter.com/susangarrett>
- YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/c/DogsThat>
- YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/ClickerDogs>

