

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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Since I recently announced that I had a friend fly to Switzerland to bring my puppy home, I've had a number of people ask if I could share the details of the preparation that went into that. Now, before you turn away saying, "Hey, I don't have a puppy that I'm flying," I think you'll all be interested in the dog training.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And the preparations for flying a puppy or a small dog really are broken into three parts. And the first part is the paperwork. Second part is the dog training. And the third part is dog training part two, which you might not need if it's an adult dog you're flying. Stick with me because it's a really fascinating part of the dog training.

So, part one, I don't want you to ever take things for granted. So, you book your flight, but don't book that flight, don't pay for that flight until you've done the research about the requirements for a dog flying in cabin or a puppy flying in cabin because they keep changing within each airline.

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And guess what, they change within the airline itself depending on the type of aircraft that is traveling on that flight. So, you have to do your research. For example, I know flying in from Europe on an Air Canada flight, the requirement is so small, it's actually like eight inches. Most standard dog carrying bags are like 11 to 15 inches tall. So how do you get eight inches? I'll share what I did on that one.

Eight inches is super small so I would look into other airlines. So, Lufthansa is probably the number one I would pick if I was flying in from Europe. But within North America, there's a lot of options because there's many airlines that have pretty great requirements with respect to the size of the kennel that you can bring in cabin.

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So, you've got to make sure when you call the airline, if you can ask them, "Can you tell me what type of aircraft is being used?" And then look on their website and they will tell you how big the dimensions, the height, the length, and the width. And guess what, when you get to the airport, most people when they check you in are going to measure that carry on and they're going to get your puppy or your dog out of there, well, they're going to ask you to take the puppy or dog out so they can see if it actually fits.

I will give you a little insider experience. For my friends who travel with dogs that I think are kind of pushing the boundaries of being too big, they fly business class, and rarely do they get asked to get the dog out of the kennel so that they could see how big they are.

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So, I've had many people tell me that they've had to get a refund on their ticket because their dog was too large by the standard of that airline when they got to the airport, and they were shocked. And you know, that could have been prevented if you've done some legwork before you pay for your own ticket, make sure you know that. Now there are some types of carriers, for example [the Sherpa bag](#) will actually, in North America, guarantee that you can get on the flight with their carry on.



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So, research the type of bag. The type of bag that I used was one like those domed tents that are very, very flexible. The bag that I use is called [the STURDI bag](#), that's the brand name. And why I like the STURDI bag is I've actually had some Velcro straps built into that bag so I can make the bag go down to eight and a half inches tall to get under the seat for takeoff and landing.

And then when we're in air, pull that bag out and take off the Velcro so that the dog has a full 11-inch kennel. That fits under most airlines, but it just so happened that the Air Canada flight that Prophet was booked on was not going to allow an 11-inch carrier.

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So, last thing to do is to check out what bag is most appropriate for flying your pet in cabin. Now I will tell you the extra degrees that I go to is I don't want the thought that my puppy might get told, "No, you have to fly that puppy down in cargo." I have flown dogs or puppies down in cargo.

Feature flew all the way in from England in cargo. But if I'm doing it, I want to have it be done in a [GUNNER crate](#). That is the only type of crate I want to fly my dog in. It's just insulated against sound and insulated against cold and heat way better than any other dog crate on the market.

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So, what I actually had my friend do who was flying over to Switzerland to pick Prophet up is to take a little GUNNER crate in a hockey bag as extra piece of luggage all the way to Switzerland. And just in case they said, "No, your puppy's too big to fly in cabin," so then I would have the crate of my choice for him to fly back in.

As it turned out, that wasn't necessary, but I didn't mind paying for that extra bag for the 'just in case' scenario. Alright, the fun part, the dog training. So, the first thing that you're going to do with that puppy, there's going to be two dog training projects going on coincidentally. So, that's why I said there's dog training project one and dog training project two.

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The obvious, we want your puppy to have as minimal as an upset as possible. And as a matter of fact, Prophet actually enjoyed the entire process. Now I can't guarantee you when he enjoyed it, but he did show zero outward signs of any stress or anxiety on that long flight over from Switzerland.

I think it was a seven-hour flight in total and didn't make a peep. He didn't make a peep the entire flight because my friends [Simone and Nadine in Switzerland](#) did such a phenomenal job conditioning him in the way that I'm going to share with you right now.

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So, the two projects. The first project is that the puppy is completely at ease sleeping in that carry on crate. The second project is, this one is a little tougher, that the puppy is completely at ease pottying on those little pee-pee pads that you're going to carry with you in your carry-on bag. So, I'll get to that potty on the pad training in a second.

What do we have to do to get our dog comfortable with sleeping in a crate? If they're not comfortable on that flight, they're going to scream the entire way. They're probably going to pee themselves. Maybe poop themselves. They're going to be so upset. They're going to maybe chew at the bag, maybe dig at the bag. The least of your worries is the embarrassment, it's the 'think of that poor little soul and what they're going through.'



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We want to prepare them. So, if you're a breeder that you know a puppy is going to be flying somewhere, you can start this, weeks in advance. First thing we're going to do is [target train the puppy to a little bed](#). A little bed that we're going to just condition it. So, it's not so much as training as conditioning.

So, feed the meals on that bed for you know, a day or two. Then you're going to put a spoonful or if you're using kibble, you might put a couple of kibbles on the bed and then get the puppy off the bed. Give them another kibble, wait for the puppy chooses to get on the bed. Now you're target training.

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I have an entire [video on target training](#). I'm going to link right here on YouTube. If you're listening to this on YouTube. If you're not listening on YouTube, jump on over and you'll see the videos that I'm going to link in this episode.

So, we've got a puppy that is target trained to this little dog bed. That, surprise, surprise, that little dog bed will fit both into a carry-on bag and into their little kennel that you may or may not be using. But you should be using it for your preparation. You're just going to go through the [Crate Games training](#).

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Alright. So, I'm not going to go through all the details of Crate Games, but when you have that target trained, that the dog loves that bed, we're going to transfer that bed to the bag by putting it halfway in the bag. Puppy goes on the bed, gets cookies, comes off. We're going to move that bed a little bit more into the bag until, lo and behold, the puppy flies in the bag.

Now with Prophet, we started with a great big bag. I think it was 15 inches tall, so way, way bigger than he's going to be flying in. But it lowers the stress and anxiety of being in it. It was open on three sides.

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So, a lot of the training initially happened in this great big bag. And then, you know, you get the puppy used to being in it. You don't zip it up. It's just, get in and get out. You build up duration, a couple of cookies at a time, just give them a couple of cookies, give them a release cue, they get out.

You grow that duration until they're in it for a minute before you try to zip it up. Two seconds, unzip it, get them out. You might just do [sessions that are like 30 seconds long](#), several times a day. You don't have to build this big duration of training all at once with this. So, we get that puppy so that they're used to being in that bag for a minute.

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And now you just grow that. Maybe tire them out with some play and then shape them to go in that bag, and they're going to have a nap in that bag. Eventually they're going to be so comfortable and so used to napping in that bag, you're going to have the last three overnights at least that that puppy is going to be sleeping beside your bed, or if you're the breeder beside your bed, where the puppy is going to be sleeping in that bag that they're going to be flying in.

Now, if you are flying like my puppy was flying over from Europe, you might want to send your bag over to the breeder so they can start some of that conditioning ahead of time. Now with Prophet, we wanted to make sure he looked super, super small. So, we actually [shaped him to go in the bag and lie down](#). Lie down so that when they looked in there's like, "Oh yeah, there's a lot of room between the roof of the bag and where that puppy is."



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Now sometimes they'll say, "Do you think that puppy can turn around in that bag?" So, we also taught him a turn cue. And we have a video right here on our YouTube channel that teaches you [how to use a target stick to get a puppy or dog to turn on cue](#). So, now we have a puppy that will go in his bag, stay in his bag, lie down when he gets in there, and will turn in a circle when you give him a cue from that bag.

The bag training is now complete. The only thing to add is carrying the puppy around. So, you [take him to outdoor cafes](#), take him where there's some little bit of noise, not so much that he's worried, but most of those bags you can open from the top and put your hand in and reassure him, drop some cookies in while you're walking through loud areas. And now he's prepared to go through the busiest of airports.

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Next, the potty training on the pads. Now this was a seven-hour flight. So, we assumed when you've got to get to the airport two hours ahead and then you have to wait for your luggage and maybe in this case, check through Canada customs, that could be nine hours before the puppy gets to go outside to go to the bathroom.

So, it was really important that he learned to potty on these pee pads. Now, the breeder did have those pee pads down for the puppies at night, but that doesn't mean he necessarily used them. And so, what Nadine did at first is she took those pads and put them on concrete but took a bunch of grass clippings and put them all over the pads so that it was just like peeing on grass.

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Once she got the puppy to pee on the pads, every day she put less and less grass on there until it was just like a sprinkling of grass. And he would immediately go over and pee there. Now she did get one of her adult dogs to pee on the pad to start this process.

But even if she hadn't, if you get that puppy first thing in the morning and you go out to grass cuttings on a pee pad, most puppies are going to pee on that pad. They use six pads to make a great big area and then got it down to just one small pad.

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And so, when you're in flight, if the puppy got anxious, you could just take the bag to the bathroom, put the pee pad down on the bathroom floor, give your potty cue cause the puppy had [been taught to potty on cue](#) and they can eliminate right there 30,000 feet above the ground level. How cool is that?

And actually, Prophet did use the pee pad, both to pee and as we were on the way out of the airport, he actually defecated on the pad as well. So, a worthy investment of time, even though my puppy may never, ever see that pad for the rest of his life.

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So, there you have it. The three parts of prep that you need to do to get your dog or puppy ready to fly. Now, if you want more details about flying a dog down below, I'm going to put a link in the show notes to an [eBook that I have on my website](#) that will give you even more detailed information about what you need to fly your dog both in cabin and down below.

I hope this all makes sense to you and trust me, I've got a few more puppy podcasts coming up now that I have a new puppy in my life. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.





Episode: #233

Flying A Dog Or Puppy: Susan's Pre-Flight Plan

Susan's Pet Carrier & Crate Recommendations:

[Sherpa Original Deluxe Travel Pet Carrier](#)

[Sturdibag Pet Travel Carrier](#)

[Gunner Crates](#)

Resources:

[Crate Games Online](#)

[Podcast Episode 200: Shaped By Dog Live 200th Celebration Episode With Friends](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Target Training for Dogs with Susan Garrett](#)

[YouTube Video: Susan Garrett's Target Stick Training, Part Two](#)

[Podcast Episode 190: Using Daily Quickies to Fast Track Your Dog Training and Grow Your Dog's Skills](#)

[Podcast Episode 145: 10 Ways to Teach a Dog to Lay Down and How to Shape It Without Luring](#)

[Podcast Episode 180: Taking Your Puppy to Café or Restaurant: Socialization Success](#)

[Podcast Episode 48: Potty Train Your Puppy in a Week \(Easy 3 Step Process\)](#)

[Flying Your Pet eBook](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Puppy Essentials with Susan Garrett Dog Training](#)

[YouTube Video: Susan Garrett's 5 Games for Puppies](#)



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.



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