



SAFE ROOM SET UP & ACCLIMATION



WHAT IS A SAFE ROOM?

A safe room is a space in your home that is set up to keep your dog secure and protected from potential hazards - both physical or things that cause emotional stress. A safe room is a place where your dog can go to feel safe and comfortable, especially when you're not home or unable to supervise them during potentially stressful situations.

Some times to use a safe room may include:

- If you have to leave home for a few hours and don't feel comfortable leaving your dog out in the house
- If you have people coming over that your dog isn't ready to or doesn't need to meet
- Your dog gets stressed when visitors come over
- Times when confinement feels better for your dog, like during times of scary noises or thunderstorms

Safe Room Setup Steps

The three “P’s” to setting up your pup’s new safe room

PICK

1

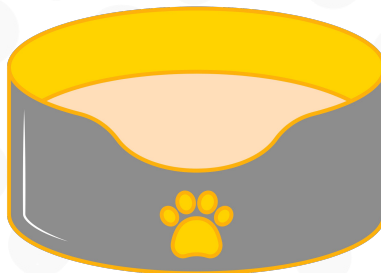
PICK THE
PERFECT
SPACE



PREPARE

2

SAFE
COMFORTABLE
INTERESTING



PRACTICE

3

PRESENT &
PRACTICE
WITH YOUR
PUP



Step 1:

Choosing the Room



The first step to a safe room is picking it!

Questions to consider:

- Does my dog have any confinement or separation anxieties? If so, talk to your trainer before you begin.
- Does my dog prefer to be near the action or shielded from it?
- Does the area need to be quiet or does sound not matter?
- Do I want to close it off with a door or baby gate?
- Can the room prevent access to things that trigger your dog's stress?

The room doesn't have to be large, in fact many dogs prefer smaller spaces.

Option could be:

- Roomy crate
- Bathroom
- Bedroom
- Laundry room
- Large, walk-in closet
- Exercise pen in any of the above

Note: this is not for dogs who suffer from separation or severe confinement anxiety



Step 2a

Make it Safe



Is your dog young and rambunctious or older and laid back?
If the former you'll want to take extra precautions to dog-proof the room:

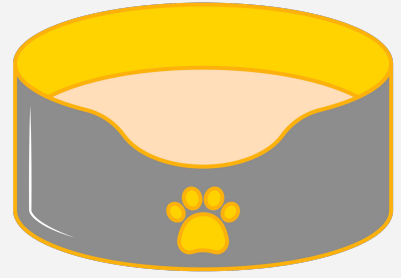
Dog Proof the Room
Remove anything they can tear up, chew or swallow
Remove trash cans unless they are pet proof
Tape down or hide electrical cords
Put away shoes, clothing, kids toys, etc
Ensure the room is a comfortable temperature
Ensure your home has a smoke alarm and carbon monoxide monitor



Step 2b

Make it

Comfortable



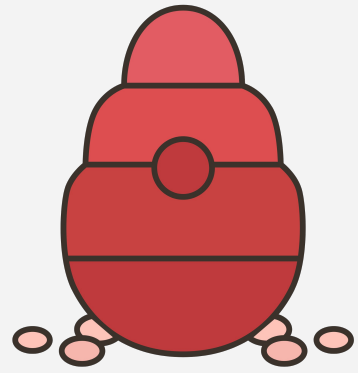
Comfort relates to feeling good but it also relates to the absence of stressors. What helps your dog feel comfortable depending on your dog's stressors. Here are some tips:

- Dogs sleep a lot – out of a 24-hour period, dogs will sleep about 50%; another 30% is spent “loafing” – when they don’t do much of anything at all. Let’s set up a comfy relaxing area
- Soothing sounds can calm your pup when they’re alone – classical music or iCalm can help ease stress, especially if you have already set up an association of calmness
- We love a box fan for white noise - ask us about the box fan hack and why it’s a favorite!
- Need to block visual stimulation? Use some window cling film, close doors, etc.
- Adaptil Plug-In (Adaptil takes up to 45 days to work)
 - Adaptil is a synthetic copy of the pheromone a mother emits after birth to calm and reassure her puppies. Some studies have shown that the use of DAP (dog-appeasing pheromone) can result in a decrease in separation-related anxieties in dogs



Step 2c

Make it Interesting

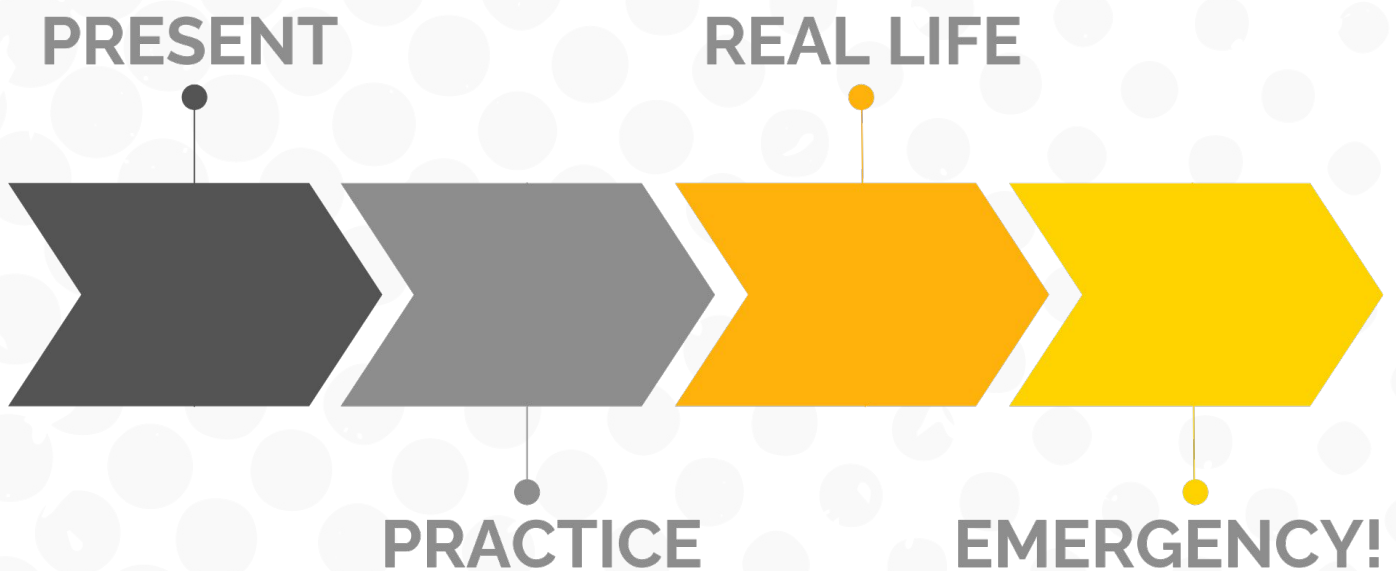


- Give your dog something to do!
 - For those hours they are awake, giving your dog something to do may distract from the stressors
 - Dogs need both mental and physical exercise – puzzles and interactive toys will keep their mind busy even when their body is still
- Several high-value, interactive toys – need space to use
 - Kibble Nibble
 - Omega paw Treat Ball
 - Tug a Lug
- Stuffed and frozen Kong, twist-n-treat, lickimat, or other enrichment items that will take some time to complete



LET'S GET BUSY!

Now that your space is set up, it's time to present it to your pup then practice for real life scenarios!



Step 3

PRESENT



The first time you present the safe room to your dog, you have an opportunity to make a **lasting memories with a big impact**. Fill the room with all of your dog's most favorite things *and* some novel bonuses.

Before you bring your dog to the room, preload it with:

- Some treats scattered around
- A favorite toy or two
- A yummy chew

Then, grab a book, a phone or your tablet and enter the room with your dog. Plan on hanging out a while, you are going to be nearby because you are a favorite – be present but be chill. Let the room be the exciting thing - not you!



Step 3b

PRACTICE



Now that you've made an impact, we are going to strengthen the positive feelings about the safe room.

This plan is a generalized approach, each dog is unique - your trainer may edit this a bit for your pup.

These practice steps will happen with you at home without the stressful thing. So, if strangers are stressful - no strangers; noises - keep it quiet; absences - don't leave.

Keep up the practice each day until you find your dog going into the safe room alone without being prompted.

	Action	Progression
1	Feed your dog's meals in the safe room, door open	The door stays open, you are home
2	Place some interactive toys and / or a stuffed Kong in the room	• Walk away but leave the door open - do this when you are home • Repeat several times until your dog is happily going in his room • Then add the cue "Let's go to your room!" (or whatever cue works for you)
3	Place some interactive toys and / or a stuffed Kong in the room	Close the door, open the door • Do this for varying lengths and random intervals throughout the day – your trainer may provide some detail here • Monitor on the surveillance camera, if you notice anxiety – pacing, panting, clawing, or other stressful behaviors, stop the session and practice with less time



Step 3C

REAL LIFE



Now that your dog loves the safe room, it's time to add just the smallest bit of stress to the situation. This is when your trainer will come back into the picture and create some setups for using the safe room in the context of a bit of stress.

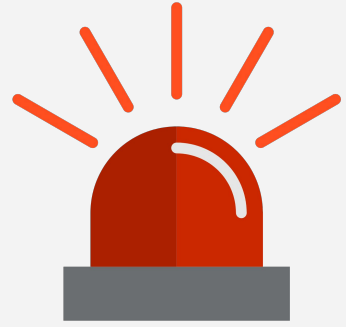
DON'T GO THIS STEP ALONE!

We want to be sure to keep your dog below threshold & protect the safety of the safe room.



Step 3D

EMERGENCY



What's an emergency in the context of a safe room?

Let's imagine that we are planning to use the safe room for our dog to hang out when visitors come over because he is scared of strangers. If we get a surprise visitor, it's our job to tell the visitor to please wait a few minutes outside while we tuck our dog into the safe room. Your visitor can wait a few extra minutes – since you have practiced planned visitors in real life setups, just pretend you are going to do a set up with your dog, so you can usher him into his safety spot.

Emergencies are about being prepared.

IMPORTANT

Think ahead and plan your actions for emergency scenarios, so you know what to do when an emergency happens! They will happen – use your trainer to brainstorm so that you already know what to do when scary strikes.

