

Bedtime\_Problems\_-\_No\_Ones\_Getting\_Any\_Sleep.txt

Question: We are loving our new puppy (now 3 months old) and she is such a great dog, but we are still struggling to get her to sleep during the night. We are crate training her. She loves the crate during the day and goes to bed fine, but quickly wakes up after a few hours and whines and cries the rest of the night. We give her plenty of exercise during the day and let her out at least twice a night because we want to make sure she isn't being fussy because she has to potty. She normally potties once, but the other times just wants to be with us.

We are crate training her for housebreaking purposes and so that we can keep track of her. We let her sleep on the bed a few nights and she would get off and wander around the bedroom, finding things we didn't know existed and having an occasional (rare) accident. She is now crated in the living room at night and we leave the TV on. She has no problem sleeping or being crated for a few hours during the day, but she resists at night. Also, in the bed she doesn't stay still and constantly tries to sleep on our heads...

Can you offer any advice?

Answer: I'm sorry you're struggling with this. Some puppies submit to the confinement much easier than others. It's actually the more intelligent and social dogs that will fight it to the bitter end.

The first thing you should know, is it won't hurt her in any way (or set back her training) to sleep in your bed or on a mat on the floor in your room, regardless of what the books might say. You need to do what works for you in your home. The puppy will adapt to just about anything. So don't worry about screwing her up. Almost all puppy owners have at least one owner with a day job who needs sleep at night. He/she might be able to survive for few days being kept up all night by a crying puppy, but no one can go on like that forever.

You puppy will need to be crate trained for riding in the car, for training/testing days while waiting her turn, and for times when you travel and she can't sleep in the room with you. In all of these situations, she'll be crated in your vehicle, or maybe next to your vehicle if it's hot outside. Otherwise, whether or not she sleeps in a crate in your home is completely up to you. Most people start out using a crate, because the puppy isn't housebroken, but as soon as the housebreaking has been mastered they'll have their dog sleep on a mat or they'll leave the door to the crate open. So, for most dogs, sleeping in a locked crate when they are at home is temporary.

On the plus side, your puppy's just about housebroken. So being locked in the crate probably isn't an absolute necessity. And, she's old enough that it's possible for her to hold her pee for an 8-hour stretch. On the negative side, she's already "learned" she can fuss and will be let out of the crate during the night, so there's little chance you're ever going to get her to sleep through the night locked in her crate in the living room.

These dogs are very intelligent and even more persistent. They are the kind of dog

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you can't feed even once from the table, or they will NEVER stop begging for you to do it again. They figure if something worked once, it will work again, if they are just persistent enough. And you know what? They are right. Everyone gives in eventually.

You also need to understand that it's completely unnatural for a puppy to sleep alone. Were she in the wild, she would be sleeping with the rest of her pack in their den. So, separating her from her pack (which is your family) during the night doesn't feel right to her and is probably pretty scary at first. It usually works best to put the crate in your bedroom, so she can see you sleeping, hear your breathing as you sleep, and get into the rhythm of bedtime. When she's in the other room, she has no idea what you're doing. She assumes you're doing something fun and she is missing out. Plus, she wants to be with you. It's what feels natural to her. It's dark outside and instinct is telling her she should be with the safety of her pack. When dogs sleep in the bedroom with you, it's easy for them to know and understand it's sleeping time.

So, the first thing I would try is moving her into the bedroom with you. No need to have a TV or radio on for her. She needs to see and hear you sleeping. This is going to be an adjustment for her, so don't expect she'll do great the first few nights. She's gotten into a habit of fussing so you'll let her out and the habit might be hard to break. On the plus side, dogs are extremely time-and-place oriented. Since she is now in a different room, you can make different rules and she'll eventually accept them.

While it's sleeping time, you should try very hard \*not\* to let her out when she fusses. Pick up her water bowl at 6pm or right after she has her dinner. Let her out for a last potty around 10:30-11:00pm and then it's bedtime. Give her a chewy (like rawhide) and put her into her crate so the door faces your bed. Tell her goodnight, turn out the lights and try to get some sleep. When she fusses, talk softly but firmly to her, telling her "no, bedtime." Of course, if she goes totally ballistic, you'll have to let her out, but I'd make it really quick and I wouldn't talk to her much, pet her or anything like that. It shouldn't be any fun at all for her. Then put her back to bed and try to go back to sleep. I'm almost positive after a few nights she'll settle in and sleep when you sleep, because that's what would be natural for her.

Make sure you set a routine and you stick with it, even on weekends. Dogs thrive on routine. They like to do the same thing at the same time every day. Until she's really settled into the sleep-time routine, you're going to have to go to bed with her at about the same time every night. Eventually, you'll be able to leave the door to her crate open or put a sleeping mat on the bedroom floor and she'll go to bed even if you haven't yet.

I wouldn't let her sleep on the bed unless you intend to allow it always. She was sleeping on your heads because your hair felt the most like her furry siblings. She would've grown out of doing that, but I understand how annoying it can be. I put our little puppies into the bed with me and lots of them do that for the first few

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nights. After a while they go to the end of the bed where they can have their space. My adult dogs sleep as far away from me as possible if they are on the bed.

If this doesn't work, let me know and we can try something different. I promise, it's not going to last forever.