

How to Build and Use an *Avidog*[®] Adventure Box



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Building Your Own Adventure Box

We are always searching for fun and easy ways to develop our pups' stability. Our Adventure Box has quickly become a favorite, particularly for early stimulation. An Adventure Box is a wonderful way to introduce baby puppies to the sights, sounds, touch and motion they will experience during their lives. Experiences like the Adventure Box may grow the size and complexity of puppies' brains, helping them to become more confident. And it's easy! Just put it in their pen or play area and watch. The pups have tons of fun while they learn and we promise, it will be lots of fun for you, too.

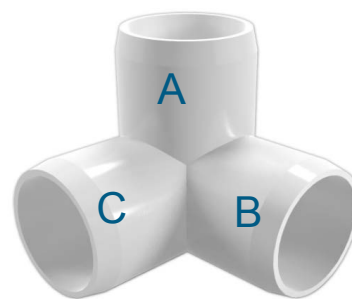
If you are handy (or have a handy friend or family member), you can build an Adventure Box in an afternoon. The most difficult and time-consuming task is drilling the holes in the PVC. Once that is done, the rest is quite easy.

Not sure you are handy enough? We get it since two out of three of us are not! As a result, we offer Adventure Boxes for sale on our website at shop.avidog.com.

If you are ready to tackle it yourself, let's get started!

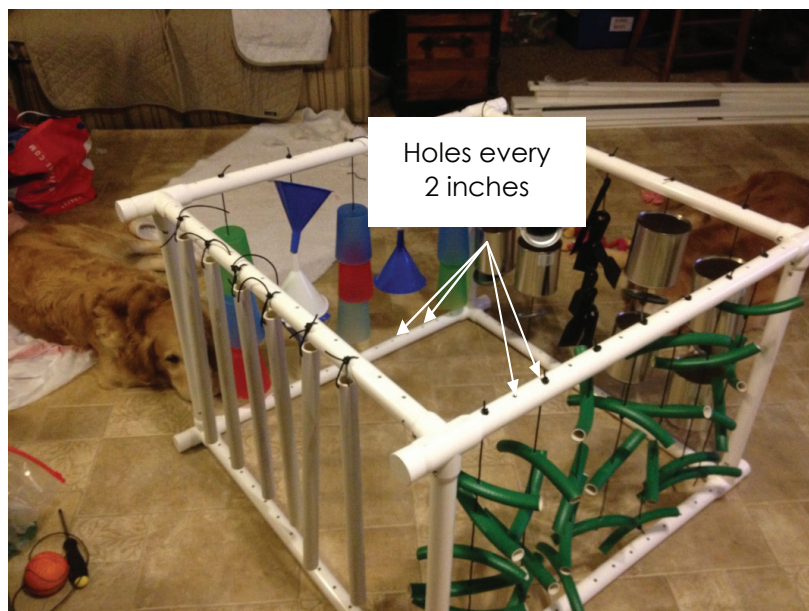
Supplies and Tools Needed to Build the Frame

- ✓ Eight 30" lengths of 1" PVC
- ✓ Four 24" lengths of 1" PVC
- ✓ Eight **three way 1" connectors**
- ✓ A drill with 1/4" drill bit
- ✓ A drill press or vice (optional but very helpful)

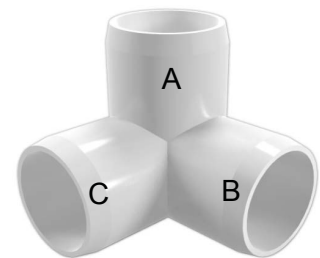


How to Make the Frame

1. Cut the PVC into 30" and 24" lengths. If you cannot do this, most home improvement stores will do it for you.
2. Drill a 1/4" hole every two inches straight through all 30" lengths of PVC. Be sure the holes are aligned across from each other so you can easily string plastic line between them. This is the most challenging step in making the Adventure Box and is most easily done with two people, a good vice and a drill press.



3. Lay four of the 30" PVC pieces in a square on the floor.
4. Fit one side of a 30" PVC pipe into opening B on one of the three-way fittings (shown right).
5. Fit one side of another 30" PVC pipe into opening C of the same three-way fitting.
6. Fit the other end of the same PVC pipe into opening A of a second three-way fitting.
7. Repeat steps 4-6 to create the rest of the square.



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8. Repeat this process to make a second square.
9. Then, insert a 24" PVC pipe into each opening A on one of the squares.
10. Place the second square over the 24" lengths of PVC and fit each piece of PVC into each opening A.
11. Be sure to press each fitting so it is snug!

Now Let's Have Some Fun!

What you hang on your Adventure Box is up to you. Your first thought when looking for each Adventure Box item should be whether the item is safe for your puppies. Your pups are going to push through, pull and chew on the items you pick, so choose carefully! Remember, pups are suicidal and will try to get their heads or body parts stuck in the items on your box. For more on Adventure Box safety, check out <https://www.avidog.com/the-top-5-ways-to-make-sure-your-adventure-box-is-safe/>.

Now, look for items that will present stimulating challenges for your pups. Your goal is for your box to be mildly stressful for your puppies. Choose different textures and colors, some of which will make noise. Of course, whatever you do choose needs to be able to be strung from the plastic line, so look for items that can easily be adapted to do that. For more on how to get the most out of your Adventure Box, go to <https://www.avidog.com/how-to-maximize-puppy-development-with-your-adventure-box/> and <https://www.avidog.com/four-more-ways-to-maximize-puppy-development-with-your-adventure-box/>.



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Once you have gathered the items you plan to hang from your box, string plastic line through each item, tying a knot in the line to hold the items in place on the line so they don't slide to the bottom.

To attach the string of items to the PVC, tie them snugly to the top of the box through the holes drilled in the pipe.

In deciding where to place the cord, consider the size of the item and the size of your puppies. Your goal is for them to have a mildly stressful but fun experience. The closer you put items the more interaction the pups will have moving in and out of the box. Be sure to make room for the puppies to get through the dangling obstacles in ways that won't scare them too much. You can always move the items closer together as they get more experience with the Adventure Box.

Stuff We Hang On Our Adventure Box

Here are some of the things we have on our Adventure Boxes. The items' names are linked to where you can purchase them if you cannot find them locally.

1. A roll of **plastic line**. Choose a line with a relatively low tensile strength so it will break if a puppy gets wrapped in it.

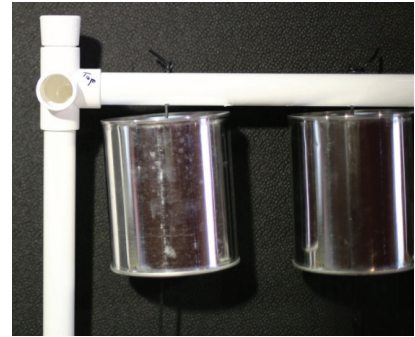
2. **Funnels**—you can use plastic, metal, large, small, any shape. Be sure they are new or at least absolutely clean of any chemicals, oils or dirt if you decide to use old funnels. You can usually get this kind of thing at a Dollar Store or Five and Dime, if you still have one in your area.



3. **Paint Cans**—Although one of the more expensive items we use, empty paint cans are our favorites. They make noise when they hit each other. They are shiny and bright for the pups. And they are a substantial object for pups to bump into and push through. To use them, buy **new** quart-sized paint cans from a hardware or home improvement store.

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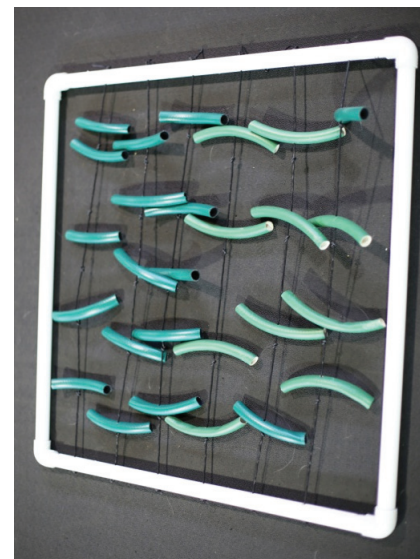
Hammer the lids on the cans and then drill holes in the top and bottom for stringing. String them by tying knots in the cord to hold the cans and lids in place. If after drilling the hole there is anything sharp use a hammer to tap the edges flat. Please note that if left outside or allowed to stay damp, the paint cans will rust.



4. **Plastic Tumblers** (Cups)—Take any hard plastic cup and drill a hole in the bottom of the cup. String the cups tying knots to hold them in place. You put them very close together if they nest or you can place them at varying distances from each other. DO NOT use the Solo plastic cups that come 50 to a bag in the grocery store. Those could easily be ripped up and chewed by puppies! If you squeeze the cup and it will not bend easily it should be safe for the puppies.

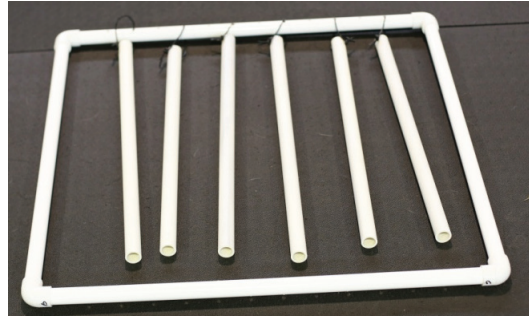


5. **Rubber hose**—Buy a small length of rubber hose and cut it into 6" pieces. Then drill a hole all the way through each piece in the center so you can string it with the plastic line. Vary the spacing between the pieces. The hose could twirl on the cord if it was tied both top and bottom or you could leave some dangling from the top for the puppies to paw at and pull on. Some of these will get pulled off, but overall they hold up well! The pieces of hose are too big for the puppies to swallow, so if they came off we just save them to restring later.



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6. **PVC**—Hang PVC from the top rail and let it swing as the puppies go through it. Cut the PVC at least an inch shorter than the height of the box to allow it to swing but you can also vary the length. Drill a hole all the way through the PVC on one end. Using a cable tie, that you can find in the electrical department of hardware or home improvement stores, attach each piece through the hole in the top rail to hold it in place. The more pieces you attach the more difficult it will be for the puppies to move in and out. You can create a wall of PVC or just have a few pieces dangling for the puppies to bang around—it's up to you.



7. **Plastic Joint Knives**. An inexpensive item that works well in our Adventure Boxes are plastic joint knives used for spackling. They already have holes in the top and hang unevenly when strung on the plastic line.



When to Introduce the Adventure Box

Although you can introduce your pups to the Adventure Box any time before they go home, we find that before 5 weeks of age is ideal since this is the time pups are not yet wary of new things. If you give them an Adventure Box as soon as they can walk, between 3 ½ and 4 weeks, they will approach it without concern or caution. Then you can use it to introduce sounds, textures and problem solving throughout puppyhood and the pups will take it all in stride. However, if you introduce it later in the pups' lives, you simply need to proceed a little more slowly so they adapt to it.

How to Introduce the Adventure Box

As with all new things we introduce to our pups, we start with an easy version and link it to good things, like food or their mom. Since our golden retriever moms cannot fit into the Adventure Box, we use treats or solid food meals to encourage more cautious pups to engage with the box early on.

The early-puppyhood version of the box has fewer, lighter and quieter items hanging down so pups will not be frightened as they explore. We toss treats inside the box so the pups have to go through the dangling items to get to them. Once we see the pups eagerly entering the box, we increase the items number, size, weight and noise-making ability. Within a day or two, the pups are charging into, tugging on and trying to dismantle the box.

When we begin feeding pups solid food, we will sometimes put the food bowl in the Adventure Box. This teaches them to tolerate things touching and bumping them while they eat.



Caring for Your Adventure Box

Our Adventure Box is built to allow some degree of dismantling by puppies. We do not want it built so sturdily that the pups can hurt themselves by pulling it over on top of themselves. As a result, pups will often remove items from the box. We simply collect the stray cans and cups, along with the line, and put them aside until we are ready to do some maintenance on the box.

Try as we might, pups will sometimes chew on the cord or dangling items so we monitor their play regularly throughout the day. We replace fallen objects and dispose of damaged ones. If they chew a cord, we collect all the pieces and throw them away.

Two or three times a week, we restring the Adventure Box, adding new items or simply replacing the old things that the pups removed. The box gets a good cleaning then before putting it back into the puppy play area.

If your box includes empty paint cans, do not leave it outside and dry cans well after disinfection because they rust easily.

A Word of Caution

Adventure Boxes are made for puppies from 4 ½ to 10 weeks old. After that, all but the tiniest of pups will be strong enough to totally dismantle the box and chew its components. In fact, depending upon the size and strength



of your puppies, you may want to stop using your box prior to 10 weeks. Please use good sense while using this product, always erring on the side of safety for your pup-pies. The Adventure Box offers a tremendous amount of development in early pup-pyhood but is not designed to be a long-term play toy.

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Have Fun!

The Adventure Box stimulates puppies' senses in a fun and safe way. Adding it to their play area teaches them, at a time when they have few fears, that things that move and make noise are interesting and fun.

While making your box, do not be limited by what we used—go to the hardware store and use your imagination but remember SAFETY FIRST! Of course, we would love to see your Adventure Box and your puppies enjoying it so please post a comment or share your videos on our [Facebook page](#).

If you are not handy or do not want to build your own Adventure Box, you can purchase one on our website at <https://shop.avidog.com/>.

Adventure Box Resources

For more on using your Adventure Box to make your pups the best they can be, check out these resources:

The Top 5 Ways to Make Sure Your Adventure Box is Safe, by Gayle Watkins (link to <https://www.avidog.com/the-top-5-ways-to-make-sure-your-adventure-box-is-safe/>)

How To Maximize Puppy Development With Your Adventure Box, by Gayle Watkins (link to <https://www.avidog.com/how-to-maximize-puppy-development-with-your-adventure-box/>)

Four More Ways to Maximize Puppy Development With Your Adventure Box by Gayle Watkins (link to <https://www.avidog.com/four-more-ways-to-maximize-puppy-development-with-your-adventure-box/>)

Purchase a pre-made Adventure Box at <https://shop.avidog.com>

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Lise, Gayle and Marcy with their best friends

Dr. Gayle Watkins (center), the co-founder of Avidog, has been breeding, raising and training puppies for 40 years. Co-breeders Marcy Burke and Lise Pratt helped found Avidog and now run Avidog Essentials, where you can buy an Adventure Box. Through Avidog's products, courses and seminars, they have helped dog lovers raise thousands of puppies—from conception to 12 months—to become stable, healthy dogs that enrich their owners' and often other people's lives.



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