

CRATE TRAINING

Does your dog prefer to nap under a table, desk or coat? Dogs feel secure in a small, enclosed space. It is like a den to them. You can recreate that feel – and develop a healthy training environment – with a crate.

The Principle Behind Crate Training

Dogs like small, enclosed spaces because of the security it offers them. Crating is not jailing your dog, and the crate should never be used for punishment. Instead, it draws on your dog's preference for small spaces and allows you an extra measure of control over your dog. If you practice preventative training, your dog will spend time in the crate when you aren't around to set boundaries.



One benefit of a crate is in potty training. Dogs try not to go to the bathroom where they sleep. If you keep your dog in a crate when you're not together during potty training, your dog will try to hold it until you let him out and take him outside. Your job is to keep a reasonable schedule with plenty of chances to play and eliminate.

Choosing a Crate

- Choose the right size crate for your dog. Your dog should have enough room to stand up, turn around and lie down. Anything bigger and he may eliminate in one end and sleep in the other.
- If you have a puppy that will grow into a big dog, you will either need two crates of different sizes or a crate with a divider that you can move as your puppy grows.
- If your dog is past the chewing stage, make the crate comfortable with a blanket and favorite toys. You want the crate to be a place your dog wants to spend time but you won't want him to spend his time ripping up bedding. Some pups never chew bedding, others do. Never use carpeting or anything in the crate that could be dangerous if swallowed.

Practicing Crate Training

- Introduce your dog to the crate in a low-pressure situation, not when you're about to leave. Leave the door open and let your dog explore.
- Remove all collars before you crate your puppy.
- If your pup is frightened by the noise of a metal crate on a hard floor, put a towel or mat underneath the crate to muffle noise and prevent slipping.
- Toss a treat or toy into the crate, then use a simple word like 'kennel' to get your dog to enter.
- Praise your dog and close the door. Open it after a few moments.
- Slowly increase the time your puppy spends in the crate with the door closed.
- Don't open the door because your dog whines. It will only teach him to whine more.
- A general rule for determining how long your puppy can be confined is one hour for every month that your puppy is old, plus one hour. Most three-month old puppies can stay in for four hours.
- Do NOT crate your dog for more than eight hours. It is unfair to leave the dog without an opportunity to eliminate or exercise any longer than that.
- The more confinement your dog has to cope with, the more exercise he needs daily. Crating is a tool that should never be used to avoid training, exercise and spending time with your best buddy.
- Maintain a regular schedule of trips outdoors so he can relieve himself. And so the reason for the trip is clear, always take your puppy on a leash to the same place.