

## Crate Training Your Puppy

Crate training your dog is one of the most important parts of creating a healthy relationship between you and your canine. Crate training teaches young dogs how to hold it in, so that they need less frequent bathroom breaks. Also, crate training is useful because if your dog displays any bad behaviors when you leave your home for short periods of time (like excessive chewing, ripping up carpet, or “going” on your furniture), a dog that likes its crate can be placed inside the crate when you leaving so it feels safe while you are gone.

### How to Crate Train

Choose a crate that is not too much larger than your dog, because you do not want your dog to be able to wander around in the crate (dogs will not pee where they sleep, but with enough room, your dog can go in a corner and sleep on the opposite end – so smaller is better). Crate training involves a significant amount of time and effort, but properly crate training your dog can be accomplished in these simple steps.

- 1) Slowly introduce your dog to the crate – Place the crate in a social area of the house, like the living room or dining room.
- 2) Try to talk your dog near crate, using a kind, helpful tone so that your dog feels safe around the crate. The crate door should be open all the way so that it does not accidentally swing into your dog’s face.
- 3) Use treats and toys to convince your dog to enter the crate – depending on how frightening the dog finds the crate, this may be a difficult task, but throwing a few treats in there and rewarding the dog with kindness whenever it moves further inside is the best way to teach your dog that the crate is safe and harmless. Do not lock the crate behind your dog. These exercises are only meant to introduce your dog to the crate.
- 4) Place food near the crate during meals – Once your dog has been inside the crate, putting food in or near the crate will help make the crate a positive experience for the dog. Each time you feed it, you can put the meal a little further back in his crate until eventually the puppy is fully inside the crate just to eat its food.
- 5) After the dog has been inside the crate a few times while eating, it is okay to close the door behind it. The first time you do this, you should open the door right after your dog finishes eating, in order to avoid any added pressure. But later, as your dog becomes more used to the door being closed on it, you can keep the door closed for longer. If your dog whines, do not remove it from the crate. Always wait until your dog has stopped whining before you let it out of the crate, otherwise your dog will think that whining is the only way for it to leave, and will continue to do so.

- 6) Once your dog has been inside the crate a few times without too much anxiety, it is time to try to start putting the dog in the crate for short periods of time while you are home. Throw a treat in there, possibly use a command, like "Crate," and close the door behind it. Leave your dog in there for no more than 30 minutes at first, but as you continue this process on different days, you can increase the amount of time by a little bit each trial.
  - a. Once you are going to leave your dog in the crate for more than a few hours, it is important your dog gets a walk first in order to not become anxious due to having too much energy.
  - b. After any crate trip, it is a vital to take your dog out for a walk and try to get it to use the bathroom. Eventually, your dog will learn that the crate is a place for sitting, sleeping and resting and only afterwards does it get to go to the bathroom.
  - c. If your dog ever has an accident in its crate, it can cause serious problems with crate training. Don't crate train if your dog has not gone to the bathroom for a long time. And, if your dog does have an accident, it is vital that you clean the crate out thoroughly in order to remove any trace of the smell. Dogs like to go to the bathroom in places they can smell that they've been previously.

Once you have completed all of these steps, your dog will be able to stay in the crate for long periods of time, and you can use the create as a way to teach your dog to hold its urine until you have taken it outside and given it the opportunity to go to the bathroom. This is key not only to teaching your dog to go outside the house, but also to be more comfortable when you are absent.