



CRATE TRAINING

Crate training is a beneficial technique used to confine the dog when he can't be supervised. Two of the most important aspects of dog training are rewarding appropriate and desired behaviour and preventing the dog from developing habits such as destructive chewing. Crate training is instrumental in the housetraining process.

Eventually your dog will spend time in crate at a veterinary hospital, at a boarding kennel or be restricted due to illness. Having been conditioned to be comfortable and even enjoy their crate will lessen their stress. Travelling with the dog in a crate is also a safe way to travel!

Dogs are den animals and will enjoy having their own space. By taking small steps you can create a positive association to the crate and they will enjoy spending time inside and see it as a safe place of their own. Crate training takes time and should not be abused. Each step may take 1-7 days depending upon the puppy or dog.

The crate should only be large enough for them to turn around and lie down comfortably. They don't like to soil where they sleep but if they are left with too much room they will eliminate in one end and sleep in the other. You can buy crates with a removable divider that grows with your pup.

Introduction to the crate

Place the crate in a high traffic area such as the kitchen or living room with a towel or blanket inside and leave the door open. When the pup shows any interest, walking over to it or sniffing the crate tell him "good dog!" and reward with a treat.

Drop some treats just inside the doorway of the crate so that he must reach his head in to get to them. Placing treats inside the crate when he isn't looking and you may find that he is occasionally searching the crate area for rewards. Never force the dog inside the crate as it will only cause him to be afraid and prolong the housetraining process.

Once he is searching the outside of the crate for treats and comfortably reaching inside with his head you can begin to put the treats farther inside so that he has to walk in to reach them. Sporadically place new toys or stuffed Kong at the back of the crate. This will teach your pup to associate good things with the crate

Begin to feed him meals inside the crate. If he is comfortable place the bowl at the back, otherwise you can put it as far inside as he is comfortable and slowly work your way back with every meal.

Closing the door

After a few meals where the dog seems comfortable with the bowl all the way at the back, you can begin to close the door while he is eating. Casually let him out just before he is finished eating. During training the praise only comes while he is in the crate otherwise he will look forward to his exit. Now you can slowly increase the time that he is sitting inside the crate after each meal.

If he begins to whine to get out you may have increased the time too fast. Wait for a quiet moment before you let him out otherwise he will learn that he can get out by whining.



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During the training process all good things are given in the crate. New toys and special treats are given to him inside the crate so he will learn that it is a great place to be!

Longer periods inside the crate

Now that he has been conditioned to think that the crate is a wonderful place to be, it is time to begin conditioning him to spend longer periods inside. Fill a Kong toy with treats (peanut butter, kibble or cheese whiz) and place the toy inside with the pup. Slowly increase the length of time that he spends with each training session, beginning by sitting quietly in the same room as the crate and eventually leaving the room. Once he can spend half an hour inside the crate in a separate room you can begin leaving him crated for short periods while you are gone. Always take the pup outside immediately to eliminate when you let him out.

Home Alone

To begin leaving him alone for short periods while you are gone you must be sure that he is comfortable and not stressed for that amount of time. Begin by leaving him for 10 min, then 15 min. Exercise him and give him a chance to eliminate before departing and leave safe toys, or stuffed Kong to occupy him while you are gone.

When leaving or returning do not fuss over the puppy, ignore him for 5 minutes before you leave and as you return.

In The Crate at Night

When you are crating the puppy at night ideally the crate should be in the same room as you. Often puppies need to relieve themselves at night so be prepared to take him out. If you have conditioned him properly, he shouldn't keep you up at night with his whining.

Sometimes the breeder begins the crate training before the puppy comes home and you may put him directly into the crate for the evening. If you haven't begun training you may tether him to your bed on the floor with his own bed and only enough leash to turn around and lie down comfortably. This way if he has to eliminate he will not want to soil his sleeping area and will whine to wake you up. He will be ready to spend the night in his crate when he is spending short time periods crated while you are gone.

Tips:

Never use crate as punishment.

- Pick up the water an hour before crating.
- Respect his space, allow the dog to go into the crate for peace and be sure that all family members do not disturb him.
- Do not leave a toy in the crate at night, waking up and playing with it may stimulate him to have to go.