

Basic Information on Crate Training

Crates have become one of the most popular tools for raising and training a puppy. In addition to being a puppy's "home" inside your home, a crate can be used effectively to housebreak a pet, control its chewing, and prevent behavioral problems.

Though some dog owners may have a negative impression of crates, crates are similar to a dog's natural environment. Dogs in the wild live in a den which protects them from predators and provides them a great deal of security and psychological satisfaction. All dogs, therefore, have a strong *natural tendency* to seek out this type of shelter. In your home, a dog has no such place to call its own, so often it curls up in corners or under the coffee table. Using a crate appeals to the dog's natural desire to curl up in small places, get its back up against something, and feel **safe and secure**.

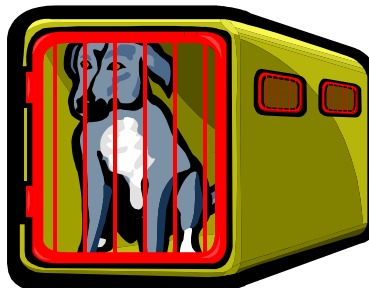
By giving dogs a "den" in our domestic homes, we can take advantage of mother nature to quickly housebreak and control chewing. **Dogs who are crate trained are well-adjusted, self-confident, and less likely to misbehave.**

Choosing a Crate

When purchasing a crate, buy one that will be large enough for the dog when it grows up. It should be 1 1/2 times its adult body length to give it adequate room to go in, turn around, and lie down. Please bring your puppy into the store and we will help you choose a crate that will be perfect for your pet. (NOTE: If the home is too big when the puppy is small, it may eliminate in one corner of the crate and go to the other corner for sleeping. Divider panels are available to solve this problem.)

Training Steps

Start from early puppy-hood and have the puppy sleep and rest in its home. Almost without trying it will train itself to seek security and comfort inside its little dog room. Make the inside of the crate as cozy as you can. Put soft, washable bedding inside and keep the crate flea free. If necessary, toss a treat in the home to encourage the puppy to go inside on its own. Don't force your pet. Coax it with food and reward it with praise. It may quickly back out or be very shy at first - that's normal. Don't punish the pup by putting (or forcing) it into its home. Again, the pup's home should be a secure place. It should not be associated with punishment, fear, or anything negative. Let your puppy get comfortable with going in and out of the crate on its own. Initially, restraining it at the door with your hand will be enough for your pet to get the idea. Gradually increase the amount of time it stays in the crate and remember to praise regularly. After a few hours or days of short training sessions, the puppy will be comfortable with the idea of being in the crate, and you can try closing the door. Eventually, the pup will sit quietly and sleep in its home with the door closed.



While your pet is inside its home, it will not urinate or defecate. This is mother nature's way of keeping the home clean. Understand that little puppies have to go about every 2 - 4 hours when they are young. While training, someone **MUST** make arrangements to come home

mid-day and let the puppy out. On a schedule let the puppy out of the crate, teach it the route to the door, praise it at the door, and take it out to the part of the yard where you want it to go. Do not praise your puppy until it is finished.

You are teaching it an elimination schedule that will stay with it the rest of its life. (See our handout "Basic Information on Housebreaking your Puppy") As the pup gets older (4 - 6 months) you can gradually leave it in his home for longer periods of time, since as it grows it can "hold it" longer. The puppy should be in the crate ANY time it is not supervised.

Even when the dog is an adult, you will continue to use the crate. This will prevent your pet from destroying the house out of boredom when you are away. It is not necessary to put food and water in the crate. Sometimes dogs will eat or drink just to "pass the time" and then they need to eliminate - and you won't be home to let it out. Instead, give it a safe chew toy in order to keep busy while you are gone.

Other Benefits of a Crate

- Chewing is controlled when your puppy is confined in its crate. The puppy cannot reach inappropriate objects like furniture or shoes. Leaving safe chew toys in the crate during the day will help focus the puppy's chewing attention on these objects.
- If your pet is sick or injured, the crate becomes its hospital room. Hot packs, cold packs, movement restriction, and giving medications are all easier when the pet can be confined.
- A crate is the perfect place for a pet while riding in the car. This keeps it out from under your feet, away from the driver, and extra safe in case of an accident.
- When trained with the crate, dogs have less behavioral problems, are more secure and self confident, are easier to obedience train, and stay calm when they must be boarded.
- The crate is cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

Please Note: The information in this handout is meant to provide basic information only. Please see a salesperson for more information.

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