

CRATE TRAINING FOR PUPPIES

An airline shipping crate or wire crate provides guaranteed confinement of your puppy for reasons of security, safety, travel, and housetraining.

Dogs LOVE CRATES! It is their “own private place” – a “security blanket.” The crate helps to satisfy the “den instinct” inherited from their ancestors. If the dog would have his choice, we suspect he would take having his life controlled and structured by his owner, rather than being punished later for causing trouble. Failure to housebreak a dog is a major reason many dogs eventually end up in the animal shelter!

The crate, when correctly and humanely used, has many advantages for both you and your pet:

You can:

1. Enjoy complete peace of mind when leaving your dog at home alone, knowing that nothing can be soiled or destroyed and that he is comfortable, protected, and not developing any bad habits.
2. Housebreak your dog more quickly by using the close confinement to encourage control, establish a regular routine for outdoor elimination, and to prevent “accidents” at night or when left alone.
3. Effectively confine your dog at times when he may be underfoot (meals, family activities, unwelcome guests, workmen, etc.), over-excited or bothered by too much confusion, too many children, or illness.
4. Travel with your dog without risk of the driver being dangerously distracted or the dog getting loose and hopelessly lost, and with the assurance that he can easily adapt to any strange surroundings as long as he has his familiar “security blanket” along.

Your dog can:

1. Enjoy the privacy and security of a “den” of his own which he can retreat to when tired, stressed, or ill.
2. Avoid much of the fear/confusion/punishment caused by your reaction to problem behavior.
3. More easily learn to control his bowels and associate elimination only with the outdoors or other designated location.
4. Be spared the loneliness and frustration of having to be isolated (basement, garage, outside) from comfortable indoor surroundings when being restricted or left alone.
5. Be conveniently included in family outings, visits, and trips instead of being left behind at home.

You want to enjoy your pet and be pleased with his behavior. Your dog wants little more from life than to please you. A dog crate can help to make your relationship what each of you wants and needs it to be.

CRATE COST:

Even the most expensive dog crate is a bargain compared to the cost of repairing or replacing a sofa, chair, woodwork, wallpaper, or carpeting! Always buy one that is "airline approved."

CRATE SIZE:

A crate should be large enough to permit the dog to stretch out flat on his side without being cramped and to sit up without hitting his head on top. It is always better to use a crate a little too large rather than one a little too small. Measure the dog from the tip of the nose to the base (not tip) of the tail. Allow for growth by adding about 12 inches. A crate too large can be made smaller by adding a partition of wire, wood or Masonite. **Remember that a crate too large for a young puppy defeats its purpose of providing security and promoting bowel control.**

LOCATION:

Since one of the main reasons for using a crate is to confine a dog without making him feel isolated or banished, it should be placed in, or as close to, a "people" area – kitchen, family room, etc. To provide even a greater sense of security and privacy, it should be put back in a corner. Admittedly, a dog crate is not a "thing of beauty," but it can be forgiven for not being a welcome addition to the household décor as it proves how much it can help the dog to remain a welcome addition to the household.

CRATING A PUPPY:

A young puppy (8-16 weeks) should normally have no problem accepting a crate as his "own place." Any complaining he might do at first is not caused by the crate, but by his learning to accept the controls of his new environment. The crate will help him to adapt more easily and quickly to his new world.

Place the crate in a "people" area – the kitchen, if possible, in a spot free from drafts and not too near a direct heat source. For bedding, use an old towel or piece of blanket that can be easily washed. Also, you might include some freshly worn unlaundered article of your clothing such as a tee shirt, old shirt, etc. Avoid putting newspaper in or under the crate, since its odor may encourage elimination. A puppy should not be fed in the crate and will only upset a bowl of water.

Make it clear to all family members that the crate is **NOT** a playhouse. It is meant to be a special "room" for the puppy, whose rights should be recognized and respected. You should, however, accustom the puppy from the start to letting you reach into the crate at any time, lest he become overprotective of it.

Establish a “crate routine” immediately, closing the puppy in it at regular intervals during the day (his own chosen nap times can guide you) and whenever he must be left alone for up to 3-4 hours. Give him a NYLA-BONE chew toy for distraction and be sure to remove collar and tags that could get caught in an opening.

The puppy should be shown NO attention while in the crate. Dogs tend to be much better psychologists than their owners – often training the owner, rather than the owner training the puppy. Any attention shown to the puppy will simply cause he puppy to believe that whining, crying, etc., is all that is needed for him to get more attention.

The puppy should be taken outside last thing every night before being put into the crate. Once he goes into the crate, he should stay there until first thing in the morning. IMMEDIATELY when the puppy is removed from the crate, he should be taken to the chosen area for his bowel eliminations.

Always feed the puppy early enough to allow ample time for bowel elimination after eating before placing the puppy in the crate. This can be up to one hour, depending on the dog. Simply clock the time after eating until the bowel movement occurs to determine this time interval for your particular puppy.

After the puppy is fully housetrained (usually 8-12 weeks of cage use), you simply can leave the door open (or take it off) and allow the puppy to come and go as he chooses. If the puppy becomes destructive during his growing phase, it is a simple matter again of confining him in the crate when he is not under your supervision.

Even if things do not go too smoothly at first – DON'T WEAKEN and DON'T WORRY! Be consistent, firm, and be very aware that you are doing your pet a real favor by preventing him from getting into trouble.