

# Let's Learn About

## Crate Training



When used properly, crate training can be a wonderful way to contain your dog during the day or at night and also as a way to housetrain. When not used correctly, crate training can be seen as punishment. The most important thing to keep in mind as you begin crate training is to never force your dog into the crate from the start and then leave him there for hours on end. It is very important to slowly begin crate training with positive associations and gradually increase the amount of time the dog stays in a crate.

### Step 1. Crate size

- A crate should be large enough that your dog can stand up, turn around comfortably, and then lie back down
- If a crate is too big, your dog will be able to pee and poop in a corner and still have room to lie down; dogs do not like to eliminate where they sleep so if they don't have room to do so, then they won't.

### Step 2. Desensitization

- Place the crate in a public room in the house; perhaps the kitchen, family room, office or bedroom and place a blanket inside
- Begin to make positive associations to the crate by placing treats or toys in and around the crate.
- As your dog readily accepts treats from inside the crate, place the treats at the far end of the crate so your dog must walk all the way in to retrieve it.
- You may begin to feed your dog's meals beside the crate so positive associations with the crate are made
- Gradually, you may begin to feed your dog inside of the crate and close the door while doing so; when your dog is finished eating be sure to open the crate for him to come out
- Over time you may keep your dog in the crate for longer periods after eating in the crate

### Step 3. Increasing length of time spent in crate

- Now that your dog has made positive associations with the crate, you may begin to leave him in the crate for gradual periods of time
- Always reward your dog with a toy or treat upon entering the crate; you may associate this with a word such as "Kennel up" or "House"
- At first, stay home while placing your dog in the crate. Begin by placing the dog in the crate for periods of 5-10 minutes and slowly work your way up to thirty minutes.
- Your dog may whine the first few times he is in the crate for a long time. It is important not to let your dog out of the crate when he whines – this will make him think that whining is what will get him out of the crate and he will continue to do it until you let him out!

### Step 4. Leaving your dog during the day or at night

- It is important that your dog not be spending BOTH the entire work day and night time in his crate
- Placing toys with your dog while he is crated will keep him mentally stimulated

<http://www.ddfl.org/behavior/crate-train.pdf>



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