



Issue: Crate Training

A crate can provide your dog with a safe quiet place to find comfort and help them feel safe and secure. Crates can be used for housetraining, and can limit your dog's access to areas of the house while they learn house manners. Crates are also a safe way to transport your pet! It is important to remember that a crate is not a solution for all canine behavior, and if not used correctly can cause your dog to become distressed and frustrated.

Crate Selection

There are many different types of crates available and it is important to pick one that is appropriate for your dog and your specific needs. Some of the most common crates include: plastic crates, fabric collapsible crates and metal collapsible crates. Your dog's crate should be large enough for them to stand up fully and turn around in. Crates can be purchased at most pet supply stores.

How do I crate train?

The idea of crate training may seem overwhelming at first, but once broken down into steps the process is simple and straight forward.

- Begin by feeding your dog their meals in the crate with the door open. You can put their food bowl in the crate or sprinkle loose dry dog food into the crate.
- Have the crate door open and toss really good treats into the crate for your dog to get. Do this repeatedly until your dog is readily running into the crate.
- Once your dog is happily going in the crate, start to point to the opening of the crate without tossing in a treat. Once your dog enters the crate, give them a treat. Do this several times until your dog is readily running into the crate when you point. You can also add a cue word with the pointing, like "crate!" or "kennel up!"

- Start extending how long your dog waits in the crate until you give them a treat. First give them a treat after a few seconds, then after 30 seconds, a minute, two minutes, etc.
- Now it is time to close the crate door. Send your dog into the crate, close the door, give a treat, and immediately open the crate door. Repeat several times.
- Now begin keeping the door closed for longer periods of time. Send your dog into the crate, close the door, and give a treat at varying intervals, first after a short period of time and then after longer periods of time.
- Begin to leave your dog in the crate with the door shut and with high value, long lasting chew toys. Kong toys with your dog's food, peanut butter, or cream cheese frozen in them are highly recommended for this.
- Slowly work up the amount of time your dog spends in the crate. Make sure to always give your dog their favorite chew toys when you leave them in the crate.

What Not to Do

1. Never use the crate as a punishment. This may cause your dog to fear the crate and will undo all your hard work making the crate a positive, comforting, safe place.
2. Don't leave your dog in the crate too long too fast. Remember that crate training happens at your dog's pace, and it is important for the space remain positive.
3. Crate training will not cure separation anxiety, though it may prevent destructive behaviors. Separation anxiety must be addressed with behavior modification (see our "**Separation Anxiety**" handout).
4. Make sure your family and guests understand that when your dog is in their crate, that is their alone time and they should not be teased or harassed while they are in their crate.

Resources:

http://humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/crate_training.html

If you need more help:

Seek out a consultation with a professional, certified behaviorist or a certified dog trainer.

Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers: <http://www.ccpdt.org>

Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists: <http://corecaab.org>