



### ***How Crate Training Benefits Owners***

Used properly crates have many benefits for a dog owner. They can give the owner piece of mind that the dog is safe and not chewing up the house, greatly speed up the housetraining process, give owners more options when traveling and provide the needed confinement necessary for some medical problems. To reap the benefits of a crate the dog is going to need to be comfortable being crated.

Having a dog that can be in the crate without displaying anxiety gives the owner more freedom, as they don't have to constantly watch the dog. It also makes it so the owner has a way of controlling the environment so the dog simply has fewer opportunities to misbehave. If a dog has destruction issues, the crate makes it so the dog cannot destroy things when it is not supervised. This is not limited to when owners are away from the house. It could be the owner is in the shower, where it simply cannot supervise the dog.

Many owners will also use the crate when company comes over, so the dog cannot misbehave around the company. This is a common time in which owners simply do not want to bother with having to be consistent with training the dog. This is

also a good option if you are unsure about whether the company will follow the rules regarding interactions with the dog.

In addition, a crate can be used to speed up the housetraining process. If an owner puts their not yet housetrained dog in the crate half an hour before they will be taking the dog out next, the chance of the dog having an accident is reduced.

Further more, having a dog that can be crated gives owners more options when it comes to traveling. The crate is a way of keeping the dog safe in the car and some hotels or places you visit will feel more comfortable knowing you have a way to contain your dog.

Lastly there will be times in which medical care requires your dog to be accustomed to being crated. When your dog needs to stay at the vet office, it will be put into a small cage. I would hate for the dog to have a more traumatic experience at the vet, just because it was not crate trained. If your dog experiences an injury, part of the healing process may also require your dog to have limited activity and to be crated for long periods of time.

### ***Choosing and Setting Up A Crate***

Crates can be made out of plastic, wood, metal or fabric. If your dog is a chewer, the metal crate is best choice and the fabric crate is the worst choice. The crate needs to be the correct size for your dog. Your dog needs to be able to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably, but extra room is not recommended. If you are buying a crate for a puppy and want to

use the same crate when your dog is mature, you will need to place a box in the back of the puppies crate to reduce the amount of available space. Putting a blanket in the crate is optional. If your dog is not attracted to fabric for elimination and will not destroy the bedding, then by all means make it comfy. Otherwise, your dog will have to earn the privilege of bedding. You may want to put something attractive for your dog to chew on in the crate. Just make sure it is not something that can harm to your dog.

### ***The Rules For Using A Crate***

Once you have picked out a crate and set it up you will want to keep these simple rules in mind as you use the crate.

1. Make sure your dog has a chance to eliminate before it is confined. You want your dog to be comfortable and relaxed when in the crate. Needing to eliminate and not being able to could be cruel.
2. Try to be proactive with using a crate, putting your dog in the crate before it misbehaves instead of after. It is best if the association of the crate is not one of punishment.
3. A dog can only be crated one hour per month of age during waking hours (6am-9pm) and never longer than an 8 hour stretch. Anything longer than this can stress the bowel and bladder pressure, causing both physical and behavioral problems. So a 2 month old puppy can only be crate for 2 hours during the day and then it needs to

come out for elimination and play. If your schedule requires longer confinement use a doggie playpen or exercise pen instead.

4. If your dog is in a state of panic or anxiety in the crate, take it out of the crate and seek professional help.

### ***How To Crate Train Your Dog***

You will want to keep the rules for using a crate in mind as you get your dog accustomed to spending time in the crate in a positive supportive fashion. With the door of the crate all the way open, let your dog see you toss a piece of food or treat into the crate. Dogs that do not already have a fear will go rushing in for the food. When your dog has eaten the food, toss a piece of food on the floor outside the crate about 5 feet from the door. Then repeat and toss another piece of food into and out of the crate. Continue until you have a dog that is running in and out for the food. If you have a dog that is fearful and wont go in the crate, take your time. Place food just inside the crate; let your dog reach in for the food. You will want to keep the confidence of your dog high, so resist the temptation to help or force your dog. Go Slow! Systematically, put food further and further back in the crate. It might take a couple weeks to accomplish this.

Once it is easy to get your dog in and out of the crate, you can tell your dog “get in” and then toss the food in the crate. Now before letting your dog out, close the door, but do not latch it. Feed your dog little pieces of food through the door. Open the

door, but as you do so feed your dog pieces of food. You want your dog to wait with the door open. When you are ready say “out” or “release” and let your dog get out.

If your dog did not panic or show distress about having to stay in the crate, start feeding you dog in the crate. At meal times, tell your dog “get it” and toss one piece of food into the crate. After your dog gets in, put your dog’s food in the crate and close the door. Sit right by the crate as your dog eats. When your dog is done with its food and before it vocalizes, open the door and hand your dog pieces of food with the door open to help your dog wait, tell the dog it can get out and let it get out of the crate.

You can expand the amount of time your dog spends in the crate, by putting it in the crate and giving it something wonderful to chew on. Just make sure this is something that cannot harm your dog. You will want to do this after your dog has had a chance to empty its bowels and bladder and has had some exercise. In the beginning, stay close to the crate. As your dog settles down to chew and is having a good time, you can slowly migrate away. If your dog fusses or vocalizes in the crate, do not go towards the crate. You don’t want to reward vocalizing, instead stay where you are or move away. Wait until the are at least 2 seconds of quiet and then go give your dog a piece of food for being quiet. Move away and go back and give food for quiet behavior a couple of times before your begin the procedure for letting your dog

out of the crate. The exception to this is if your dog is in a state of panic. Under those circumstances, let your dog out and seek professional help.