

## Article One

Crate training is valuable for both your dog and you

Dear Gus,

We've just purchased a puppy, and have heard so much about "crate training". Why is crate training better than just gating off the bathroom or laundry to confine the dog to an easily cleaned area when we are not able to supervise him?

Dan W., Orange

Dan, the first thing you need to understand is a "dog's life". Dogs are born with a natural denning instinct. The earliest dens were a cave, hollow log or a hole in the ground. The dog will instinctively not soil where it sleeps. During the first five weeks of the dog's life, they live on mother's milk, and the mother then cleans up their waste when they eliminate. Once the dog is introduced to solid food, the mother will bring the dog out of the den and stimulate him to eliminate outside.

Crate training your puppy will continue this natural denning instinct, and make housebreaking the puppy much easier. It will also keep him out of mischief at times that you cannot supervise him. The bathroom or laundry is' too large to simulate the den, and also leaves too much room for damage or injury to your pup. It also will isolate your pup from day to day life, which can result in a poorly socialized and fearful dog later on.

Whenever the pup is out of the crate, the leash and collar should be introduced gently and formal guidance on how to behave should begin. Keep the pup with you at all times he is not in the crate. He will have a very short attention span, and can be introduced to a pillow or blanket as his place to rest and have quiet play outside of the crate. Recognize that he needs to eliminate very soon after meals, and take him outside to a specific "dog relief" area immediately after eating and awakening. He should be housebroken in a few days. Keep his crate in an area where the family spends most of their time, so that when he is in the crate (which should not be for long periods of time other than overnight) he is still part of the family.

I hope this helps!

Gus.

BACK