

The Dog Crate and Your New Puppy!

A sturdy wire dog crate can be the best friend you and your dog will ever have. To you, human, a crate may seem to be a “cage”, so you may object to the idea. You are not a dog! The dog regards his crate as a handy indoor dog house- a security blanket to which he can retreat to rest, to escape confusion or to adjust to strange surroundings. If you should travel with him or leave him in someone else’s care, to him it spells “home” wherever it is set up.

For the puppy, the crate is an invaluable training aid. Confined to his crate while his owner is out of the house, he can’t destroy, soil anything, or hurt himself. He really welcomes this sort of security when left alone- even if not at first though.

Using the Dog Crate Properly

Start your puppy in it as soon as possible, the younger the better (**not before 7 weeks of age**). Set it up in a corner, possibly in the kitchen or wherever you plan to keep him. A metal gate across the door of the room is a helpful adjunct to crate training. Put a blanket, old rug, or soft towel in the crate, rather than expensive cushions- at least until he is past the chewing stage. Further security is achieved by placing a blanket or towel over the top and sides of the crate, making it a real “den”, especially at night. Put play toys, and feed the puppy in the crate so that he has only a very pleasant association with it. Never punish him with the crate, or “force” him into it- if he flops down to sleep elsewhere, just gently pick him up, place him inside and shut the door until he is well awake again. He will be too sleepy to care and will be getting the proper association. Soon he will seek the crate automatically when he is tired.

Use these frequent periods to advantage, and don’t hesitate to confine him to the crate several times a day for short periods of time, especially when you are too busy to watch him. This is important until he is housebroken and also for his safety. Puppies like and need to chew, but chewing the cord of a lighted lamp can result in a painful death.

Always confine him in the crate when you are out of the house! He may howl in resentment at first, not because of the crate, but because you are leaving him behind and he knows it. Leave him a bowl of fresh water and give him a bone/toy which is absolutely safe to chew and good for his teeth, something he will enjoy. Don’t worry and don’t weaken, he will settle down as soon as you are gone.

Learning this type of discipline is a vital part of his young life. The puppy’s brain is fully developed by the time it reaches 7 weeks of age, and he is going to learn with or without your help. It may as well learn what you want, rather than learning on his own and picking up bad habits in the process.

Always remember to remove any collar when crating him- a collar can become caught in the mesh and badly frighten or injure your dog. Confine your puppy to his crate all night and solve the housebreaking problem very quickly. Remember- feed no liquids and very little food late in the evening. One of the greatest advantages of the dog crate is that the dog won’t soil it unless he is desperate because it is his home- hence, its great value in housebreaking.

The dog crate, intelligently and properly used, can indeed spell real happiness for both dog and owner. A good collapsible wire crate last forever and is so very worthwhile, the cost is soon forgotten... a real bargain considering its many advantages.