

My article this time will be about my experiences and humble opinions about crate-training and feeding procedures. Both of these topics have been inspired by my past dear Labradors, Halley, Abbey and Clifford, and my current 2 dogs, Tom & Jerry. When I first became a “real” dog owner, not one my parents owned, but my OWN dog, I was in my mid-twenties. My husband & I had been married a few years when we brought Halley, a very spunky, yellow female Lab into our family.

At the time, I didn’t suspect how ignorant I truly was about raising a dog properly. The first week was SO hard! Halley screamed and howled and yelled in her crate, until she finally lost her voice after a week. I worried, my husband celebrated. She was just fine, it just took her awhile to get used to not having her 7 brothers and sisters to snuggle up to during the night. So, we had her out all day. After pulling my hair out for a few weeks, trying to keep my house clean and the puppy from not chewing on EVERYTHING, we got advice to use the crate during the day to get those chores done.

It worked like a charm! Halley needed more sleep (what did I know?), so she was better-adjusted and I got some things done in the house and had some “down time” from chasing her all over. When we got Abbey, we were better at this stuff, so she got adjusted quickly, plus she had Halley to harass. Finally, with Clifford, he was easy. He had the most laid-back temperament, he crate-trained easily as well. All of my Labs became big fans of their crates, they would go there during storms or if they felt uncertain.

With Tom & Jerry, it’s been super easy. They never made a peep in their crate, even on the 1st night! Just curled up together and slept all night. Having 2 siblings has been a delight in many ways, and this was the first indication of how much they’d rely on each other. Again, it’s given me the opportunity to leave them for 5 hours while I’m out taking care of my client’s pets without worrying about what they were getting into or chewing up. So, I highly recommend crate-training for dogs, it’s good for the dog and safe, while being peace of mind for the owner.

Now, on the 2nd topic of feeding. I’ve come to a very interesting conclusion, that took me by surprise, quite honestly. My Labradors were

typical for that breed, they ate whatever was put in front of them, right away, no questions asked. Now that I have Tom & Jerry, who are small-breed terriers, the story has changed. They are not nearly as pro-food as their predecessors were! Once I've discovered WHAT they like to eat, I found that I was feeding them TOO MUCH of it! If you rely on what the dog-food bag indicates, you will overfeed.

So, that is my opinion, is that many owners overfeed their pets, with good intentions, but none the less, it isn't good for the pet. I was feeding a small meal in the morning, and a big one before they went to bed. My whole family noticed they were passing a lot of gas, all the time! I've adjusted the amounts so now am feeding a smaller amount of dry, with a spoonful of wet mixed in, and it's the same for breakfast and dinner. However, I change the flavor of wet.

Now, both Tom & Jerry are standing and waiting to be fed and there isn't nearly the amount of "tooting" going on around here, at least not from our dogs!! :-)

Save yourself some money, cut down on food, and don't overuse treats. Your dog will appreciate their food and their treats much more, and won't be overweight.

On a funny end note, I recently decided to trade in their little plastic puppy bowls for real adult silver bowls. Jerry didn't care, and ate as usual. Tom took a look and backed quickly away, there was a DOG in that bowl looking back at him! It took him a week to become comfortable and he's still set to run, just in case that "bowl dog" makes any quick moves!! Funny dogs.