

Crate Training - General Info

We advocate crate training for golden retrievers. Crates should be used to keep your golden retriever puppy in during times that you are away from home, sleeping, or preoccupied with something which precludes you from being able to completely supervise your new golden retriever puppy. Initially some people react with believing that locking up your new golden retriever is cruel. We believe that it is not. Crating your golden retriever puppy allows you to go about your required business knowing that your beautiful new golden retriever puppy is safe and sound until you can once again return to him/her. Imagine being out, coming home, and finding that your puppy has broken/chewed something valuable or close to your heart, eaten something and is now either poisoned, has a bowel blockage, or is dead from something lodging in its throat. Now imagine, coming home, your golden retriever puppy is in his/her crate, the house is just as you left it, puppy is healthy, and both of you are thrilled to see one another. Personally, we would pick the crate.

Crate training is not only useful for keeping your golden retriever and your home safe. Crate training your golden retriever aids in housetraining (see below) and in training against unwanted chewing. It is also the best way to keep your new golden retriever safe while traveling in a vehicle, and it is a wonderful way to keep your puppy quiet following spay and neuter surgery (Golden Retrievers like running and playing long before the vet recommends they run and play following surgery). As well, the crate can become a private place for your golden retriever where there are children involved, and it is quite simple to instill the rule that when puppy is in his/her crate, the puppy is left alone. This is valuable in giving young golden retriever pups the much needed rest time, and teaches the youngsters to respect this time.

How does crate training help in training against unwanted chewing? When your golden retriever puppy is in the crate, it cannot chew on things it shouldn't. Golden Retriever puppies chew for a lot of reasons; boredom, teething, exploring, or just because. If your puppy is properly supervised, you can teach it what is allowable chewing (i.e. their own toys) and what is contraband chewing (your family heirloom, the poisonous houseplant, etc.). When your golden retriever puppy chews, it is rewarded. It either is no longer bored, its teething pains feel better, and it is having fun. This sets up the puppy that, as it grows up, whenever it feels uncomfortable such as when you've gone out the door and it's a little anxious, or when it is bored, it will chew whatever it finds. Thus, you have an adult Golden Retriever that will chew. If, however, through training and proper supervision, your golden retriever has learned what it is allowed to chew, then when it needs to satisfy the urge, you will have a non-destructive golden retriever who understands what his/her toys are for. We again, choose crate training.

The bottom line is, golden retrievers don't mind their crates. Their crate becomes their little space where they can rest and spend time comfortably.

How to Crate Train A Golden Retriever ...

When you first bring your golden retriever puppy home you should already have your crate. Set it up in an area central to the family, but not in heavy traffic areas of your home. We recommend in your kitchen near a door leading to a fenced yard where puppy will go out to relieve him/herself. It helps to leave the crate in one location (Golden Retrievers are dogs and dogs are creatures of habit and learn to rely on these things). The day you get your new golden retriever puppy home let it explore the crate. Put a doggy biscuit and/or an interesting toy into the crate. Let the pup wander in and out of the crate (you may have to coerce it to go in a couple of times) at first leaving the door open. Several times through the day, take your puppy back to where the crate is and repeat the toy/cookie routine. Praise your puppy (Golden Retrievers thrive on praise) for going into the crate in a quiet,

happy voice. Praise your golden puppy for playing in the crate. After your pup has entered the crate a few times, put a brand new exciting toy into the crate, lure your pup in and close the door. Just for a few minutes. If the puppy whines you can talk to him/her, put your fingers through the door and touch him/her, but do not take the pup out until s/he settles. Then give lots of praise and open the door. Every time you put your puppy in his/her crate, use the same word, such as "crate" or "kennel." Eventually your puppy will go right in when you give the command.

Patience is the key to the effective crate training of your new Golden Retriever puppy !!!.

Wire or plastic? What size crate? Blankets? Alarm clock? What to put in the crate ...

We personally use plastic crates for our Golden Retrievers. They simulate a "den" environment and better protect your puppy particularly when traveling. The size of crate for Golden Retrievers varies depending on the size of the dog (males are usually bigger). We recommend no smaller than 24W x 26"H x 32"L for smaller Golden Retrievers and 28-30"W by 30-32"H x 36"L for larger Golden Retrievers.

With respect to bedding, we recommend none. If you put a blanket or towel in the crate, and the puppy pees, it will be soaked up. This does not teach the puppy that if he/she pees in the crate, he/she will have to lay in it. For that reason, no bedding is best. We do not recommend alarm clocks ticking or hot water bottles. We do not recommend feeding your puppy in the crate. As well, do not provide water in the crate as food and water will cause the puppy to have pee and poo. You can leave the pup with a safe toy or two (nylabone, kong, rope toy) and perhaps a doggy biscuit. Do not put your golden retriever in the crate wearing a collar, or put rawhide, pig's ears or squeaky toys. Remember, you want them to be safe.

For how many hours and until what age are Golden Retrievers crated ...

When you first get your new golden retriever puppy she/he will be 7-8 weeks of age. At this age it is advisable to have your pup in the crate for no longer than about two hours before letting him/her out to relieve themselves, have a little play and a cuddle. You WILL have to get up every 2-3 hrs. during the night to take your puppy out at this age. Once your golden retriever reaches 10-12 weeks, about four hours is the rule. It is not advisable to leave your golden retriever in its crate for longer than 6 hours until you get past the 16 week mark. Should you find you must leave your pup for longer than this, then be kind and have a neighbor or relative come in and let your puppy out and spend a little time with him/her. After about 6 months old, your pup should be able to stay in the crate for about 8 hrs. max during the day. At night it may go 8-10 hrs.

Remember, Crate training is best, for both you and your pup!