



Crate Training Your Puppy

If you are bringing a new puppy home, using a crate can limit their access to the house until they learn the house rules. Properly training your dog to use a crate can make it easier for transporting your dog in a car as they feel safer in their crate and will enjoy spending time in there when needed. Crate training may take time and effort, but it is a proven way to help train dogs that may act inappropriately.

Crate Training Process

When crate training your puppy there are two things to keep in mind: The crate should always be associated with something pleasant, and training should be in a series of small steps.

Step 1: Introducing the Crate

Place the crate in an area where the family spends the most time and place a soft blanket down in the crate for comfort. Encourage your dog to enter the crate by dropping treats in a trail to the inside of the crate. DO NOT force the dog, if they are hesitant, be patient and try tossing a favourite toy in the crate instead.

Step 2: Feed Your Dog There Meals inside the Crate

After your dog is introduced to the crate, begin feeding them their regular meals near the crate. If your dog is still reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far as the dog will go inside. Slowly place the dish a little further back in the crate each time you feed them. When your dog starts to get comfortable eating inside the crate, then you can close the door while he is eating. Open the crate as soon as they are done eating. However, with each successive feeding leave the crate door closed a little longer until your dog is comfortable being inside the crate for 10 minutes.

Step 3: Crating Your Dog When Left Alone

You can begin leaving your dog alone in there when they start to feel comfortable in the crate without any anxiety. Leave a few of his favourite toys in the crate let them enter on their own by using regular treats. You may leave your dog in the crate prior to leaving, but it's recommended this time period be no longer than 20 minutes.

Step 4: Crating Throughout the Night

When crating your dog throughout the night, it may be best to keep the crate close to the bedroom, either in a hallway or nearby bathroom. You will want to hear your dog whine if they



Crate Training Your Puppy

need to be let outside to eliminate themselves. This will also help them not associate the crate with social isolation. You can however, when they are sleeping comfortably in their crate, slowly move them to a location you prefer.

While crate training can be a helpful way for training your new pup, there are some potential problems that can occur if not done properly. You do not want your dog to feel trapped and this may be the situation if your dog is spending too much time in their crate. If you are crating them when you are out to work, then again at night, this is too much time being spent in a small space. Puppies should not be in their crate more than 4 hours as this part of their life is prime for socializing.

Using the crate for a remedy of separation anxiety will not solve the problem. The crate may stop your dog from being destructive, but they may injure themselves on attempt to escape. Read through our **Separation Anxiety** handout for more information.

Crate Training takes time, so be patient. Trying to speed up this process can result in issues down the line, and possibly having to start over. Make sure you follow the steps provided and give the appropriate time that is needed for each step, to ensure your training is a success.