

basics of CRATE TRAINING

Crate training is one of the most effective ways to train a dog of any age. When using a crate to train a dog, an individual is working with the dog's natural behaviors. Canines throughout time live and raise their young in dens. Dogs feel the same safety and warmth of the den when they are in a crate. This idea can be used to easily house break a dog or older dog. Another benefit of crate training is that the dog is somewhere safe and comfortable when on one is around to supervise the dog's behavior.

The crate is a positive gadget and shouldn't be viewed as a "babysitter" for the dog. A dog that is crate trained has the feeling of its own safe place. When taking the dog on trips, the crate is easy to take along to hotels or tents. Your dog will feel safe and comfortable in an unfamiliar place. When taking your dog to the vet or to the groomer, they are often put in kennels; for a dog that is crate trained this stressful experience is reduced by the dog having the same positive "den" feeling.

New dogs left out in the home alone can get into trouble, which includes chewing, having accidents and pretty much anything they can get their noses and teeth into. Eliminate these problems by simply crate training. When using this method, one can be assured that the dog is in a safe place while the owner is gone. When someone is home, the dog can be supervised out of the crate and then disciplined for any negative behavior. Catching the dog in the act of being destructive or chewing is the best time to discipline. This assures that the dog can make the connection of why it is being punished. When you don't catch him in the act, don't correct the dog. IT'S TOO LATE.

When it comes to crate training a dog, buy a crate where the dog is able to stand up and turn around. Initially the dog may whine when put into the crate. Be patient, don't encourage bad behavior by letting the dog out of the crate every time he is whining. The best idea is to put the dog in to the crate before leaving; that way you will not be tempted to let the dog out. After you leave, the dog will settle down. After a couple of weeks, the dog will get used to the idea and will not whine when placed into the crate. Crates are the perfect tools to help establish a schedule for house breaking.

Another important rule is to feed the dog on a schedule, don't free feed. Make sure to make enough time after feeding for the dog to eliminate before putting the dog into the crate (usually about 15 minutes after the dog eats and needs to eliminate). When no one is available to watch the dog, place it into its crate area. When returning home, immediately let the dog out of the crate and let it outside to go to the bathroom. After the dog has relieved itself, let it back into the house. Now you are home to keep an eye out for any behavior that may need to be corrected like chewing or having accidents. Your dog may need to be on leash when out of the crate at the beginning to help set structure and keep the dog out of trouble.

How long can you ultimately leave a dog in a crate unattended? That depends on your dog and your schedule, but it should not be longer than the course of a workday. When getting a puppy, keep in mind that they have to eliminate 2-3 times more often than adult dogs. Until a dog is 6 months of age, it is unrealistic to expect it to last more than 4 hours during the day. When getting a dog make sure to adjust your schedule accordingly.

dos and don'ts of CRATE TRAINING

Dos of the crate

- Make sure it is a safe comfortable place for your dog to truly rest and get down time.
- Adjust where the crate is, depending on your dog. Some do well in social areas like the living room, other dogs will do better in a bedroom or basement where they are not distracted.
- Allow the dog access to the crate even after house breaking, they like having their own room.
- Utilize the crate any time you are gone until you know the dog can be left out in the home and not have accidents and not be destructive; for some dogs this may be months, years, or a lifetime.
- Leave chew toys in the crate, preferably nothing digestible. We want it to relieve stress, not contribute to the dog having an accident.
- Be calm when putting the dog in and getting them out of the crate, making coming and going a “non event.”
- Get the dog calm using distance pressure before allowing it out of the crate, use a leash if necessary.
- This is a great tool to help the dog understand you control the resource of space, so be consistent and it will reflect in every other area of the dog's training.

Don'ts of the crate

- Never use it as a form of punishment.
- Don't leave food or water in the crate, it will only encourage having accidents.
- Don't leave bedding if your dog is a destructive chewer, this might save you a vet visit for an obstruction.
- Don't crate your dog for long periods of time without doing a structured activity beforehand.
- Don't use potty pads or newspaper in the crate; this will encourage your dog to eliminate. We want to encourage the pup to hold it.
- Don't leave young dogs in the crate too long. Rule of thumb for leaving a pup is age in months plus 1 hour. So a 2 month old puppy shouldn't be in the crate longer than 3 hours. Through the night allows for about 1 or 2 more hours, but keep in mind getting a young puppy, you will need to get up in the middle of the night for a potty break.