



## Crate Training

Crate training is a valuable tool for any pet parent. Many people don't like the idea of their dog being caged or confined. However, there are so many benefits to crate training your dog:

- 🐾 It offers them their own safe space (or den) that they can retreat to when tired, stressed or needing to be alone.
- 🐾 Allows for safe separation in a multi-dog household.
- 🐾 Assists with house training as dogs will not toilet where they sleep
- 🐾 Offers a safe and secure place for your dog when visitors or tradies come to your home
- 🐾 Sets your dog up for less stressful vet stays as they are already conditioned to being confined. This also applies if your dog has to be confined at home following surgery.
- 🐾 Provides a safe and secure place for your dog should you need to evacuate in the case of an emergency e.g. bushfires, floods
- 🐾 Safer travel, whether it be in the car or for air travel
- 🐾 Many dog sports require dogs to be crated when not actively participating.

## Getting Started

- 📖 Pick a suitable crate. Crates can range from fabric to hard plastic to wire and sturdier metal crates. Consider what kind of crate will meet your needs. Collapsible wire crates are a common & versatile choice.
- 📖 Your crate must be large enough for your dog to comfortably stand up, turn around and lie down. Be sure to allow enough room for a soft crate mat or dog bed as well.
- 📖 Consider a cover for your crate as well. This can assist with helping settle a new puppy at night and provide an extra sense of security.



Crates are where awesome things happen!  
Never use a crate as a form of punishment!



# Crate Training 101

- ✦ Start off by putting your crate somewhere your dog can access it easily and where you spend a lot of time e.g. lounge or family room. For a puppy, you may want to consider a second crate in your bedroom so you can hear when they need a toilet break at night.
- ✦ Put a soft mat or blanket that your dog likes in the crate to make it more comfortable and maybe a favourite toy. Secure the door in an open position. Allow your dog time to sniff and inspect the crate. Encourage them to come closer by placing some treats near the door and just inside the door. When your dog takes the treats, give verbal praise.
- ✦ Start throwing treats into the back of the crate to encourage your dog to go all the way in. Once your pooch is happily going into the crate, you can add a cue like "crate" or "bed". Point to the crate, say your cue and then throw a treat into the crate.
- ✦ You can now start reinforcing your pooch for using the crate. Give your cue – once your dog enters the crate, you can mark and reward. You can also train a release cue that teaches your dog even more control. When your dog is in the crate, give your release cue (e.g. "out") and throw a treat on the floor outside the crate. After a few practices, try the cue by itself and only mark and reward when the dog exits the crate.
- ✦ Once your dog is comfortable and going into the crate on cue, you can start closing the door for a few seconds reinforcing them while the door is closed. Slowly build up the duration until your dog is calmly staying in the crate with the door closed. A tasty chew or filled Kong can also help build duration.
- ✦ You can now try feeding your dog in their crate with the door closed. Start increasing the time they spend in the crate at meal time and also begin leaving the room while they are crated, gradually increasing the time they are left alone in the crate.



- 🐾 If your dog begins to whine in the crate, wait until they stop and are quiet for a few seconds before praising and opening the door. This will ensure you are not teaching your pup that whining = door being opened. You may need to go back a step or two in the training process.
- 🐾 Young puppies may whine when they need to toilet so take them out for a toilet break before returning.
- 🐾 Never rush crate training – small steps at your dog's pace!