



Crate Training for Dogs

What is crate training?

A crate is a portable kennel that is large enough to contain the dog it is intended for, made of either metal, plastic or fabric. Crating is the practice of using this kennel for training purposes, usually in housetraining and house proofing a dog (so it doesn't chew the household items).

What does the dog think?

If introduced properly a crate represents a safe haven for dogs. Somewhere they can go and it is for them. It can be somewhere they are fed and sleep. It is its private bedroom, which it absolutely will not soil in if it can help it. Use of the crate can alleviate a number of problems, stop others from developing and aid substantially in housetraining.

Proper use if the crate

Crating a puppy or a dog can often seem unappealing to humans, however small den like structures **are** appealing to dogs. A dog's crate is similar to a child's playpen except it has a roof (dog can jump out of a play pen) and is chew proof. Also, a crate is not suitable for activity or exercise but rather a place for rest. Crates can be helpful to teach some dogs or puppies to switch off.



If a crate is properly introduced to a dog (or puppy) the dog will grow to think of the crate as a safe haven. Most dogs who are crated will use the open crate as a resting place.

The most important use of a crate is to prevent the dog from doing something wrong

Controlling your dog's environment is a powerful way to mould good behavior

Obviously, it would be unfair to leave a dog or puppy in a crate all day while you are at work. Crating for a few hours while you are out is fine. If you work full time maybe have someone come in a let the dog out for a while or come up with another confinement area for the dog such as the kitchen, laundry or outside run area.



A secondary advantage of the crate is that it minimizes damage done by the dog (especially a young dog) to the house, furniture, shoes etc. New puppy and dog owners often give their companions too much freedom which gives the dog far too many choices and with that comes too many opportunities to make poor choices. Poor choices which lead to destructive behavior around the home or yard. This can cause much frustration for the dog owner who then feels they should punish this poor behavior. When in fact the behavior is completely normal for a dog in that situation. Crates and managing the dogs environment make it easier for the dog and

owner to get along and build a positive relationship by setting the dog up for success. It also protects the dog from harm by its destructive behaviour such as ingestions of splinters or toy parts, shock from chewing through electrical cables etc.

A young dog should be placed in its crate whenever it can't be supervised. If a dog is trained in puppy hood with a crate, it will not always require crating. Puppies and untrained dogs may require extensive crating. After a year or so of crate training, many dogs will know what to do and what not to do and will have good habits. At this time



crating might be only used when the dog needs to be out of the way, when traveling, sleeping at night or recovering after and illness or operation where little to no activity is advised by the vet.

This dog is recovering from knee surgery and keeping the dog quiet and calm is crucial in it's recovery. If a dog is crate trained it makes recovery from illness and injury so much less stressful for you and the dog!

How to teach your dog to like the crate

- Place dog's bed or mat in crate and leave the crate door open.
- Place ALL of your dogs meals in the crate.
- In addition, scatter tiny pieces of tasty treats in the crate as you walk past the crate throughout the day.
- Once the dog is happily spending time in the crate with the door open, start closing the door while your dog is eating his meal. Let your dog out a few minutes after he has finished eating. Only let him out when he is quiet and relaxed.
- Gradually increase the duration the dog is in the crate
- ALWAYS leave the dog with an appropriate chew toy ie bully stick, pig or lamb ear, cow hoof or stuffed Kong.
- Remember your goal in using the crate is to produce a reliably housetrained dog. You are always working towards the time when you don't need to use the crate extensively.
- As your pup gets older it will naturally develop ways of telling you it needs to go outside. Though this probably won't happen until the pup is at least 4-6 months of age.
- Some dogs may need to be crated when left alone during their adolescence until they can be trusted inside the home. Don't give too much freedom in the house too soon. Start with 15 minutes alone in a room with an appropriate chew toy to keep your dog busy.

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Other tips for successful crate training

- Think of the crate as a good thing. Your dog will to.
- Remember it is your responsibility to provide play, training and exercise sessions each day, as well as crate time.
- Take the puppy or dog out to toilet after meals, sleep or play sessions. Just before you go to bed at the night, and first thing in the morning. Remember young puppies are unable to hold on overnight so they should be taken out more often.
- Leave something appropriate for the dog to chew while in the crate. A bone, a kong stuffed with yummy treats, an everlasting fun ball with part of the dogs daily portion of kibble.
- Ignore the dog when whining or barking for attention.
- Some dogs will settle in the crate much better if the crate is covered with a light blanket.
- Don't punish the dog if it has toileted in the crate.
- Do keep the crate spotlessly clean.

Trouble shooting

If you have a young puppy in a large to very large crate. They may sometimes pee inside the crate at the far end away from their bedding, water and food areas. The best way to manage this is buy a wire crate with a divider which inserts half way along the crate effectively making the area smaller for the puppy. This will help avoid the puppy moving to the other end to pee.



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Therefore, you **MUST** be proactive and take puppy out very regular for toilet opportunities in the appropriate toilet areas. As the puppy learns not to pee in the crate you can gradually increase the size of the pups' area in the crate by moving the divider further along in the crate. This may need to be done gradually over time.

Here is a link to our House Training and Management video which shows how crates and confinement areas can be useful in housetraining puppies and dogs;

<http://www.goldcoastpetbutler.com.au/free-training-resources.html>

Here is a great video on how to crate train your dog or puppy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPheiar_6k0

Other ways to manage your dogs environment.

- Once your dog has learnt to not soil in the house or chew household items and you feel you don't need to use the crate as often you can still manage your dogs environment and prevent free access to your house.
- Baby gates can be used to effectively manage your dogs movements around the house. Tethering your dog to a heavy piece of furniture can be useful as well.
- Baby gates can often be picked up at garage sales for as little as \$10.
- Play pens are useful for smaller dogs. Large breeds tend to push them around and eventually learn to jump out of them.
- Outdoor play pens are a great way to allow your young puppy sometime outside on the grass while you are inside or at work. Tip: use tent pegs to peg the pen into the grass for extra security. Peg some good quality shade cloth or a single bed fitted sheet over the top of the play pen to avoid direct sun light onto your puppy.

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What size crate and where to buy crates and play pens?

Your dog needs to be comfortable in his crate. Give him plenty of room to stretch out and turn around and stand up and lay on his side. When buying a crate for a puppy always choose one to fit your puppy as an adult size dog.

Crates and puppy play pens are readily available from good pet supply stores and online.

Avoid cloth crates until you know your dog will not chew the crate. While cloth crates are easier to transport they are also much easier to destroy!!!



*Crates can be used when traveling with your dog.
Crate trained dogs are easier to take camping and on
holiday as you can take their bedroom with them.*

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