

Crate Games

(developed by Susan Garrett)

Objective

The objective of training "Crate Games" is many fold including: teaching the dog to find the crate "rewarding", teaching the dog to be quiet when in the crate, teaching the dog to wait in the crate until released and in general, giving the dog one more situation where self-control will result in "what the dog wants"!

Quiet in the Crate:

- C Cover the entire crate with a tarp/blanket etc. (something that will prevent the dog from seeing out any side of the crate). Flip the "front" of the cover up so the dog can see out the front of the crate.
- C Have the Handler stay near the crate. "IF" the dog barks or whines, IMMEDIATELY, flip the cover down over the crate door so the dog cannot see. *Don't say anything!*
 - C WAIT until the dog is QUIET for a count of "1-banana", then IMMEDIATELY flip the cover up over the door so the dog can see out - *Don't say anything!*
- C Repeat the above EVERY time the dog barks. It will likely take several weeks before the dog puts two + two together and figures out that it's the BARKING that causes the cover to be put down - be patient!
- C Now, clearly this is NOT going to work through the entire class if the Handler has to stay with the crate! For dogs that BARK in the crate, only ask the dog to spend a short time in the crate (say 5 minutes) - the Handler MUST be with the dog the entire time!!! Do NOT let the dog "learn" to bark in the crate when the handler cannot "work the cover"! If for any reason the Handler has to move away from the crate - TAKE THE DOG WITH THEM!

Crate Games!

Step #1

- C Take 5 treats in your hand.
- C Puppy in the crate.
- C Bend down or crouch.
- C Place hand on crate door and WAIT.
- C When puppy sits, open the crate door and (without letting the puppy out), deposit a treat at the back of the crate (say "get it!") and close the door. If you have a crate with a grate at the back, simply drop the treat into the back of the crate and say "get it!". Note: it helps to remove all bedding as the treats tend to get "lost" and you really DO want the puppy to notice them!
- C Repeat 5 times.
- C Note: puppy will likely come out of the sit immediately as you open the door, that's fine for now.
- C Note: when you're "done" the 5 repetitions, RELEASE (use a RELEASE command) the puppy out of the crate to pay a game of tug! This is VERY important!

Step #2

- C Take 5 treats in your hand.
- C Puppy in the crate.
- C Bend down or crouch.
- C Place hand on crate door and WAIT.
- C When puppy sits, open the crate door. If the puppy gets out of the sit, immediately CLOSE the crate door and wait for the puppy to sit again. When the puppy will sit all the while you open the crate door, deposit a treat at the back of the crate and say "Get It!" and close the door. If you have a crate with a grate at the back, simply drop the treat into the back of the crate and say "Get It!". Repeat 5 times.
- C Note: when you're "done" the 5 repetitions, RELEASE (use a RELEASE command) the puppy out of the crate to pay a game of tug! This is VERY important!
- C Do NOT move to step #3 until the puppy remains in the Sit while you open the door, at least 80 % of the time.

Step #3

- C Take 5 treats in your hand.
- C Puppy in the crate.
- C Bend down or crouch.
- C Place hand on crate door and WAIT.
- C When puppy sits, open the crate door and stand up – Count to 3 (to yourself).
- C If the puppy has NOT moved, deposit a treat at the back of the crate and say "Get It!" and close the door. Repeat 5 times.
- C Note: when you're "done" the 5 repetitions, RELEASE (use a RELEASE command) the puppy out of the crate to pay a game of tug! This is VERY important!
- C If the puppy moves when you stand up or during your count, immediately close the crate door, count to 3 and try again.

Step #4

- C Take 5 treats in your hand.
- C Puppy in the crate.
- C Bend down or crouch.
- C Place hand on crate door and WAIT.
- C When puppy sits, open the crate door and stand up – Count to 2 (to yourself). Take ONE step back away from the crate. Immediately step forward and deposit a treat at the back of the crate and say "Get It!" and close the door. Repeat 5 times.
- C Note: when you're "done" the 5 repetitions, RELEASE (use a RELEASE command) the puppy out of the crate to pay a game of tug! This is VERY important!

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Step #5

- C Take 5 treats in your hand.
- C Puppy in the crate.
- C Bend down or crouch.
- C Place hand on crate door and WAIT.
- C When puppy sits, open the crate door and stand up – Count to 2 (to yourself). Take TWO steps back away from the crate. Immediately step forward and deposit a treat at the back of the crate and close the door. Repeat 5 times. You should increase the distance that you move away from the crate with the door open, ONE STEP AT A TIME. ALWAYS be sure you can get to the crate door and close it before the puppy can get out. If you're in too much of a hurry with this and the puppy gets out (even ONCE), you'll have to work VERY hard to overcome YOUR error!
- C Note: when you're "done" the 5 repetitions, RELEASE (use a RELEASE command) the puppy out of the crate to pay a game of tug! This is VERY important!

Step #6

- C Take 5 treats in your hand.
- C Puppy in the crate.
- C Bend down or crouch.
- C Place hand on crate door and WAIT.
- C When puppy sits, crouch down, open the crate door and reach inside with the leash in your hand. If the puppy moves, CLOSE the crate door and stand up. Try again.
- C If the puppy does NOT move, clip the leash onto the collar and stand up. If the puppy moves, CLOSE the crate door! Try again (the leash is already attached, however, perform all the same steps to be sure the puppy understands that it's to remain in a sit while you do them!).
- C Immediately RELEASE the puppy out of the crate, and play a game of Tug.

Step #7 Crate Game Rule Outs (proofing)

- C Take 5 treats in your hand.
- C Puppy in crate
- C Bend down or crouch
- C Place hand on crate door and wait for sit
- C When puppy sits, open crate door.
- C Still crouching in front of crate (be READY to CLOSE the crate door), "lower" a treat to the ground. Count "1-banana"
- C IF the puppy stays still, pick up the treat and give it to the puppy (DON'T throw it to the back of the crate as that would take the puppy "out of position").
- C Repeat until all 5 treats are gone.

- C Repeat the exercise (5 times) waiting for a count of "2-bananas" and "3-bananas"; up to "5-bananas" before picking up the treat.

Step #8

- C Same as Step #7, however, "drop" the treat on the ground instead of "lowering" it to the ground!

Step #9 - Rule Outs Review:

- C Rule Outs! If you can do the following (and the dog does NOT move!), you're ready to move on to the next step.
- C Open door, step away 10 feet, count 10 return.
- C Open door, reach in, put leash on, drop leash on ground, step away 10 feet, count 10, return, release!
- C Open door, step away 2 feet, drop treats on the ground, count to 10, pick up treats, give to dog.

Step #10 - Explosive Release from Crate, Part #1:

- C Dog in crate.
- C Place hand on crate door and wait for sit
- C When dog sits, open crate door and attach leash to dogs collar.
- C Straighten up, move away about 4 feet from the crate, with a toy in your hand (hidden from the dog).
- C Give the dog it's "Release" command (OK! Brake! Whatever!).
- C As soon as the dog comes out of the crate, RUN away!
- C When the dog catches up, produce the toy and have a game of tug.
- C Note: do NOT show the toy to the dog until it catches up (don't use the toy as a 'lure'!).

Step #10 - Explosive Release from Crate, Part #2:

- C Dog in crate.
- C Place hand on crate door and wait for sit
- C When dog sits, open crate door and attach leash to dogs collar.
- C Straighten up, move away about 4 feet from the crate, with a toy in your hand (hidden from the dog).
- C Play the 1-2-3 Game! (assuming the dog UNDERSTANDS the 1- 2-3 game, if not, refer to the Puppy 1-2-3 Game handout!).
- C Say 1....2....3.....OK! As soon as the dog comes out of the crate, RUN away!
- C When the dog catches up, produce the toy and have a game of tug.
- C Note: do NOT show the toy to the dog until it catches up (don't use the toy as a 'lure'!).