

CRATE TRAINING

Crate training is an excellent way to teach your dog good behavior, as well as give your dog his own space. Benefits of crate training include:

- 🐾 Prevents damage to your furniture and other household valuables while you are away or sleeping
- 🐾 Helps you teach your dog proper chewing and elimination (bathroom) behavior
- 🐾 Provides security for your dog and safety for young children in your home
- 🐾 Easy traveling
- 🐾 Improves your relationship with your dog

Before you begin crate training, keep in mind that the crate should be large enough for your dog to stand up and turn around in. Pet stores carry many different sizes of crates so you can find the one that best fits your dog. You should place the crate in a room where there is activity, i.e. your family room, because dogs are social animals. Finally, the crate should be used as your pet's retreat, or "sanctuary" — it should not be used for punishment. Use the crate to avoid problems such as chewing and jumping before they occur, and use a separate space if you wish to put your dog in "time out."

Crate Training Puppies

Begin crate training with your puppy early in the day so he has the whole day to adapt to the crate. Place his favorite treats, toys or food in the crate to motivate him to enter the crate on his own. The first time you confine your puppy to the crate he should be ready to take a nap, so schedule this for after a play or exercise session and after he has gone to the bathroom. Leave the room but stay close enough to be able to hear him. It is normal for your puppy to cry or whine at first, but never reward him by letting him out when he cries. It may be difficult, but you must ignore his cries until they stop before you release him from the crate.

If your puppy does not quiet down on his own, you may try lightly scolding him, but be sure not to scold him excessively. Harsh scolding could lead to fear and anxiety, and exacerbate the crying or cause your puppy to soil the crate. Be sure to stay out-of-sight when scolding your puppy so he doesn't learn to associate the correction with your presence. Try squirting him with a water sprayer or shake a can with pebbles or coins to interrupt his cries.

Crate Training Adult Dogs

Except for the introduction of your dog to his crate, crate training an adult dog is similar to crate training a puppy. Set up your dog's crate in his feeding area and leave the door open for a few days. Place food, treats and toys in the crate so the dog is motivated to enter on his own. Close the crate door only after your dog fully enters the crate on his own.

As with puppies, your dog may cry or whine at first. Use the same correction methods given for training puppies with your dog. Gradually increase the amount of time that your dog must remain quiet in the crate before you release and reward him.