



Training Handout | Crate Training 101

Why crate train?

Used properly, a crate is an effective tool for managing, transporting, and training your dog. Her crate becomes her den; a special place where she can go to sleep, take a break from the kids, or be safely confined any time that she is unsupervised. Crates make housetraining easier because dogs don't like to soil their sleeping areas so s/he will naturally avoid eliminating in her crate. However, crates can be easily misused. No dog should spend most of her day, every day, in a crate. When choosing a crate it should be big enough for your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down.

How to crate train your dog

· The introduction – It is important that your dog is comfortable with her crate before you ever shut the door. Place a comfortable bed and toys in the crate. Dogs learn through association, so you can teach your dog to love her crate by providing wonderful treats and toys in the crate. Let your dog explore the new crate on their own.

-Do not force her to enter it- Instead, place several treats in the crate periodically throughout the day so that when the dog does venture into the crate on their own, they are rewarded for their curiosity. Feed meals and other treats and chews in their crate exclusively during the training process. This will teach her that the dog gets rewarded for going inside the crate. At first, be sure to leave the door open and let the dog enter and exit on their own.

· Closing the door – Ideally, you would not need to leave your dog inside her crate until they have had time to adjust. That is why it is useful to set the dog's crate up in a dog-proofed space so that they (and your home) are safe during the training process. After your dog begins to willingly enter the crate, you can close the door while the dog eats and open it after they have finished eating. Then, you can slowly increase the amount of time the door is closed over time. Finally, your dog will be ready to stay in her crate while you take a short trip out of the house. Always provide a stuffed and frozen Kong or other long-lasting food toy to occupy your dog while she is crated.

Things to avoid

- Using the crate to punish your dog - It is important that your dog views her crate as a good place rather than associate it with punishment or scolding. It is okay to use a crate to separate your dog from the household activity for short time outs or naps. Make sure to grab a stuffed kong or chew bone that you know is safe for your dog and lead her to her crate when she needs some quiet time alone.
- Crating a dog for more than 10 hours in any day - Crating an adult dog for more than 10 hours in a day can be considered inhumane even if she is given bathroom breaks. If your schedule requires you to be away from your dog for long days consider alternatives such as doggy daycare, a hiking/walking company, or a pet sitter.

Initial isolation distress is common in the form of some whining and barking, take it slowly and don't get discouraged! If your dog is having prolonged issues being alone after initial couple weeks, please see *separation anxiety handout*.

Please scan the following QR codes with your phone's camera to watch some wonderful crate training videos!

