

Crate Training

What Is Crate Training?

Crate training is a form of house training or potty training that is very popular right now. It's safe for the puppy and it works. Basically when you are not at home, sleeping, or otherwise involved, puppy goes in a crate. Dog crates can be purchased at pet stores or on-line. Garage sales are also a good place to find dog crates. They also come in many styles depending on how much you're willing to spend. The style doesn't matter as much as the size.



What size of crate do I need?

When it comes to crates size matters. The crate should only be big enough for your puppy to stand up, turn around, and lay down. No bigger. If the crate is too big then your puppy can sleep in one spot and potty in another. The idea behind crate training is that puppies will not potty where they sleep.

Location of the Crate

The crate should be placed in an area of the house where the family spends a lot of time. A family room is a good spot. Dogs are naturally pack animals and they want to be where the pack is. Another good location would be your bedroom; that way your puppy is sleeping in the “den” with the rest of the pack.



Introducing The Crate

When first introducing the crate don't shove puppy in, instead let puppy make the first move to go in the crate. Place something familiar inside like a t-shirt with your smell and some favorite toys. Start by placing his favorite food or treats inside so that puppy wants to go in for the treat, leave the crate door open at this time. Slowly start to shut the door when puppy is inside, just for a few seconds at first and then for longer periods of time when puppy is ready.

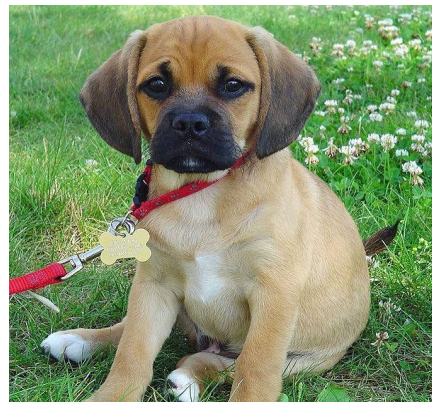


Make The Crate A Happy Place

When first starting crate training the crate should be made a “happy place” for puppy. **The crate should never be used as a punishment.** Making the crate a good thing in the puppy's mind will make it easier for you to train him. Puppy won't fight to go in the crate, and once puppy is used to the crate, he won't cry when left alone. Feeding meals in the crate is a good idea also, puppy will think food and crate go together. Make sure you take puppy outside to potty before you leave and after he eats. A special toy he only gets in the crate is also a good idea, a Kong filled with peanut butter is a good treat idea that keeps them busy. Take the special toy away when you get home; this toy is only for crate time.

Leaving Puppy

Keep puppy crated while you are not at home, when you are working, running errands, etc. Also crate him at night when everyone is asleep. The puppy and your carpet and furniture will be safer if puppy is crated rather than being left out. Puppies can cause a lot of damage in a short amount of time. They could get into a toxic substance or ingest something that becomes a foreign body. A good rule is to crate until puppy can be trusted to be home alone.



How Long Is Okay To Be Left In The Crate?

Many dogs are left in their crate all day and do well. Ideally your puppy will be let out about every four hours or so. Leaving puppy any longer than that is too much, think about how small their bladder must be! When potty training take your puppy outside as often as possible. During training you may have to come home for lunch to let the puppy out or have a pet sitter do it for you. A puppy is a big responsibility, just like a new baby.



Whining In The Crate

The puppy is going to whine at first, there is no way around it. This can get really annoying, especially at night so be prepared. The puppy may need to go potty so always try this first. Take your puppy straight outside to go potty then right back in the crate and to bed, no play time. Always give a treat or praise for going potty outside of the crate. If puppy doesn't need to potty then he is just whining because he wants out of the crate, this is where it gets tough! You need to ignore your puppy's whines, it will only last a night or two until he learns that he isn't getting what he wants by whining. If you give in once the cries will be louder and longer next time. **The key is to ignore, it will stop.**