



Crate Training

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🐾 Why should I use a crate?

A crate is a way to comfortably confine your dog or puppy. The crate is a tool you can use to housetrain your dog and prevent many undesirable behaviors from developing. Crating indoors will have a calming effect on your dog and will help prevent her from developing inappropriate digging, barking or house soiling habits.

All too often pet owners will leave their dog out in the yard because they do not trust the dog in the house. This can lead to many other problems because, like us, dogs are very social animals. When they are left alone outside they will develop stress related behavior problems. This stress can result in excessive digging and barking. Instead, crate train your dog and you will be protecting your home and possessions while meeting your dog's social needs.

🐾 I wouldn't want to be put in a box, why would my dog?

Most people desire large houses and therefore may not be able to appreciate the comfort and security a crate can provide for their dog. Do you ever notice that your dog will crawl under the coffee table or behind the couch to nap? This is because dogs feel more secure in enclosed spaces. So while a crate may seem strange or uncomfortable to you, your dog will love it. Always keep the crate in an area near yourself or family members to avoid isolating your dog and making crating feel like punishment. At night you can put the crate near your bed.

🐾 Choosing the right crate.

When choosing a crate it is important that it is the right size for your dog. As an adult your dog should be able to stand up and turn around in the crate. If you are starting out with a young puppy you can block off the excess space with a box. If your pup has too much room when they are small they may eliminate in the crate. It is very important that your dog's area always accommodates their size.

🐾 How do I introduce the crate to my dog?

When you first introduce the crate to your puppy or older dog remove or tie the door open so they won't get trapped inside. Throw some treats or her favorite toy inside for her. Feed all their meals and give them high value food distribution toys like the Kong Wobbler when they are in the crate. Do not lock them in until they willingly go in by themselves. Your dog must love the crate before you lock the door. The amount of time it will take for your dog to freely enter the crate will vary.

🐾 How long can I leave my dog in a crate?

Once your dog willingly enters their crate, the maximum time they should stay boarded is about four hours. If you have long days at work you will need to give your dog an opportunity to eliminate during the day. Either come home at lunch time or have someone else stop by if needed. If you can't come home leave your dog in a small room like a kitchen or a laundry room. Leave the crate door open so your dog may walk away from their bed to eliminate. It is best not to let your dog eliminate in the house unless it is absolutely necessary.

🐾 Will my dog always need the crate?

You can use a crate for your dog's entire life. They will always enjoy the safety, familiarity and security of their crate. If you absolutely do not want it in your home I always recommend that dog owners keep their dogs crated until they are at least 18 months of age. By this time most dogs have developed into well mannered adults. However, you will find that your dog really likes the crate and will probably miss it if it was gone. Dogs vary tremendously in their activity level, potential for destruction, trainability, self-control, and reactions to stress. As your dog matures and becomes trained, you may experiment with leaving her loose indoors in your absence, preferably for short periods of time at first. Most dogs bond to their crates, and voluntarily use them as beds. You may wish to continue to provide this security at home and when traveling.