



Crate training

Why should you use a crate?

- A crate is a safe, secure area for your puppy to be, when you can't give him/her your full attention, e.g. night times or when you are busy during the day. It's a secure place for your puppy to retreat to, where he/she can relax and won't be disturbed.
- It's the perfect way to protect your house from damage, due to inappropriate chewing!
- It will help speed-up toilet training.
- Its somewhere for your puppy to go when he needs time out.
- It's a safe and secure way to transport your puppy/dog in your car.

How big should the crate be and where should it be placed?

- The crate should be big enough for your puppy to fit in comfortably when he/she is fully grown with room to stretch out. Sometimes this means that you will need to section off an area as the crate might be too big when the puppy is still very young.
- Place the crate in a corner of the living room, so the puppy can still see what is going on and won't feel left out, but will also be able to relax.
- Also a good idea to have it reasonably near an exit to the garden, so when the puppy has woken up in the morning or after a nap in the afternoon you can take him out to the garden quickly to save any accidents.

What should be put in the crate?

- The crate should be comfortable and inviting for the puppy to sleep in. On the bottom of the crate you can put newspaper and on the back half of the crate you can put either a vet bed or a soft towel for the puppy to lie on. If your puppy does need to toilet and cannot attract your attention, he/she will not want to go on the vet bed / towel, but will probably have used newspaper for this purpose before he/she joined your family. Change this paper each time it is soiled (do not comment or criticise the puppy for using the paper, he/she has to go somewhere if you are not available to let him/her out).
- It is advisable to have a water bowl in the crate, so the puppy always has access to water.
- Feed all the meals in the crate, and every time the puppy gets a chew or a sweetie it should be given in the cage. You will soon see your puppy run to the cage every time he gets his food or a treat.

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Because the puppy is fed in the cage he will soon associate this place with a huge reward (food). Still some dogs need some extra training regarding the cage. Teaching the crate is a nice place to be in, can be done as follow (using clicker training):

- Leave the cage door open. Every time the puppy goes anywhere near the cage, click and throw a sweetie into the cage. The puppy will have to go into the cage in order to be able to get the treat. Click again and give him another sweetie while in the cage. Do this several (10-20) times.
- Wait for your puppy to go into the cage by itself, click and throw a sweetie into the cage. The cage door stays open at the time and the puppy can walk out of the cage if it wants but as long as it is in the cage, you can continue clicking and treating. Do this several (10-20) times again.
- Wait for your puppy to go into the cage by itself, click and throw a sweetie into the cage. Close the cage door while the puppy is eating it's sweetie but continue to click and treat for being in the cage. You can only click if the puppy stays quiet. Do this 10-20 times.
- Wait for your puppy to go into the cage by itself, click and throw a sweetie into the cage. Close the cage door while the puppy is eating it's sweetie but continue to click and treat for being in the cage. The interval between the clicks is longer now and you start to move slightly away from the cage. You can only click if the puppy stays quiet. Do this 10-20 times.
- Wait for your puppy to go into the cage by itself, click and throw a sweetie into the cage. Close the cage door while the puppy is eating it's sweetie but continue to click and treat for being in the cage. The interval between the clicks is longer now and you start to move away from the cage into the other room but come back after each click to treat the dog in the cage. You can only click if the puppy stays quiet. Do this 10-20 times.
- Repeat this training exercise for a longer period (few months) and you can also introduce a command e.g. "Go in your bed" or "Go in your kennel", while the puppy is entering the kennel so the dog learns to go there on command.

Other useful tips:

- Depending on how comfortable your puppy is at the above stage you can begin to close the door for short periods at a time. Make sure your puppy has been toileted before, so you know he won't need to go out for a little while and make sure he/she is tired (so have a bit of a play first, let him/her out in the garden and then straight into the kennel). Put his/her meal in the cage or a Kong ® filled with food.
- Begin to go about as normal with the puppy confined, if he begins to whine or bark, remember to ignore him. Only go back to him when he is quiet, if you go back to him when he is being noisy, he will learn to keep barking for longer and longer periods until you return!
- As long as you are careful to ensure good positive associations with the crate, your puppy should quickly become happy to relax as soon as he enters the crate. Puppies quickly learn to sleep through the night in the crate and are usually clean very quickly. If the puppy does whine and fidget during the night, get up and take the puppy to the toileting area in the garden, keeping it as calm and low key as possible and as soon as he has performed return him to bed.

- To make sure your puppy is happy in his crate at night (with the cage door closed), you can put the crate close to or in your bedroom so he does not feel alone. Later on you can start to put the crate further and further away from the bedroom.
- On returning to the crate to let puppy out, try to be calm and not make it a really exciting time, this may lead to unwanted vocalising/whining/urination as the puppy anticipates its release! Take the puppy straight to the toileting area to help speed up his/her house training.
- Your puppy should not be left for long hours at a time in his/her crate during day time. Initially the puppy will need to come out of his/her crate frequently during the day (every half hour or so) to toilet, but as he/she gets older the puppy should be able to go for 2 – 3 hours before he/she is going to need to relieve him/herself.
- The crate is not for use as a punishment, but can certainly be used for time out if puppy has become unruly or is over-tired.
- It is a good idea to use the crate at (human) meal times to avoid over-excitement at these times; use a stuffed Kong® with part or all of his/her meal to keep him/her occupied.

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