

# Crate Training Puppies

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The crate must be large enough for the dog to stand up, sit or stretch out comfortably. Choose a floor covering that the dog doesn't chew. The covering should be easy to clean or disposable.

Place the crate in a room where the dog will be content. A basement or laundry room is too isolated. Kitchens or bedrooms work best. The dog should not be banished from human contact. Dogs are pack animals and require company.

Before placing the dog in the crate, ensure that he has received enough exercise and attention. Some dogs may be contented with a five-minute walk, but many dogs need 15 to 30 minutes of vigorous exercise.

Leave the dog's water bowl and chew toys in the cage at all times. Give him his food and treats inside the crate so that the dog will learn to enter the crate on his own. Reward him, whenever, he goes in the crate. The crate must be an enjoyable place and never used for correction or punishment.

Begin crate-training a pup as soon as you get him home. With an adult dog, it may take a week or two before he feels comfortable enough to enter the crate on his own.

Place the dog in the crate with a few toys or teats and a bowl of water, close the door and leave the room. Stay within hearing range. If the dog is quiet for about five minutes, return, reward the dog and let him out. If he will not stay quiet, you should use some form of remote punishment because you must not go to the dog. Try leaving an intercom or walkie-talkie by the dog. A loud horn or a can of marbles will also work. At the first sign of crying or anxiety, make a loud noise and yell "quiet." Sometimes spraying water at the dog works better. When the dog is quiet, let him out and praise him.

Repeat the procedure, gradually increasing the amount of time that the dog is left alone. By the end of the first day, you should be able to confine your pup for several hours, or even the entire night. An adult dog may have to be trained much more gradually, perhaps over a few weeks.

The time in the cage should never exceed a puppy's limit. A two-month-old pup can probably control himself for three hours, a three-month-old for four hours, etc.

If you must leave the pup alone for longer than the above guidelines, then you will need to combine the crate with a paper area for elimination. Place the crate in a room, with the door open, leave his toys and water dish in the crate, place papers near the crate for elimination.

Never, ever, use the crate for disciplining. Otherwise, you will never, ever be able to train your puppy.

## **CONFINEMENT/CRATE TRAINING**

A dog's crate not only prevents behavior problems (chewing, soiling, destructiveness, digging, escape behavior, garbage raiding, etc.) but also serves as a home or den for the dog. Crate training is neither cruel nor unfair to the dog. On the contrary, leaving the dog unsupervised to wander, investigate, destroy, and perhaps get injured is far more inhumane than confinement. As long as the crate is big enough, the dog gets sufficient exercise and attention, and is not left in the crate longer than it can control itself, the crate is a safe, secure, and humane place to confine a pet when unsupervised. Keeping a dog outside in a yard, confined to a pen or dog run, or in a

room that can be properly dog proofed are also acceptable alternatives. Crate training has a number of important advantages:

**Security:** A contented dog is able to spend time sleeping, grooming, or chewing a favorite toy in a favorite location out of harm's way.

**Safety:** Since dogs, especially puppies, have a strong desire to investigate and chew, the crate, like a child's playpen, is an excellent to keep a dog safe when the owner can't supervise. Dogs that are allowed to investigate may get into medicine chests, cupboards, diaper pails, garbage cans, kitty litter etc. Some dogs have even gone through drywall or glass windows trying to escape.

**Prevent costly damage:** With their instinctual desire to chew, investigate, dig, escape, scavenge and of course eliminate, dogs are capable of doing a great deal of damage. A secure, inescapable confinement area can prevent thousands of dollars worth of damage.

**Prevent behavior problems:** Besides preventing destructive behaviors, crate training can also prevent barking at doors and window, jumping onto furniture or counters, house soiling and entering inappropriate rooms or areas of the house.

**Correct behavior problems:** In order to correct problem behavior the dog must be supervised so that proper behavior can be rewarded, and undesirable behavior can be punished. Since no owner is capable of 24 hour monitoring, the dog should be kept in a confined area such as its crate, when the owner is not available to supervise.

**Train proper chewing and elimination:** Since most dogs will not soil their 'den', crate training is one of the best ways to teach a dog to control elimination. The dog can also be directed toward chewing on appropriate objects, by placing selected toys in the crate.

**Reduce barking:** Another common problem is crying when the owner and puppy are separated (especially nighttime). Using crate training techniques the puppy can be taught to spend time alone in its crate. Some owners prefer to allow their puppies to sleep in their bedroom (in the crate) where it is less likely to vocalize.

**Improved dog/owner relationship:** Since crate trained puppies require less discipline for misbehavior, cause less problems and frustration for the owners and are much less likely to cause damage, the pet-owner bond will likely be stronger.

**Traveling:** Since most crates are collapsible or portable they can be taken on trips to securely and safely house the dog. Most motels/hotels require that a dog be crated while in the room.