

# CRATE TRAINING

## What We Use A Crate For

Crate Training is an effective training tool and is a means for transporting your dog. It also has the following benefits:

Introduced properly, it can become:

- a safe haven (like a den) for your dog.
- a special place for your dog to relax and chew on their toys (instead of your furniture).
- a calming place where they can run to if they feel scared (like in a thunder storm).
- a restful retreat when they need time away from children.
- somewhere they can safely lie down when you cannot supervise them in the house.
- a great teaching aid in settling
- an aid in toilet training. Dogs do not like to soil their sleeping area and will begin to let you know when they want to go.

During the day, a dog should be confined to their crate for no more than an hour without a toilet break. However, during the night the crate is an ideal bedding solution. You will need to get up when you can hear that they need to go to the toilet, but for the remainder of the night they can stay in their crate with the door closed. This will teach them to hold on until you come to take them to the toilet.

## What size crate

A crate should be big enough for your dog to stand up, turn around and lie down. They are made from either plastic, wire or fabric material and can come either collapsible or fixed.

## What you need in the crate

Comfortable bedding  
A bowl with fresh water  
Toys



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## TRAINING YOUR DOG TO USE THE CRATE

**REWARD** : Small handful of treats and soothing praise

- 1 Set the crate up in any room of the house so long as it is in a place that is familiar and where the dog feels comfortable. You will also need to set it up where you can hear them when you are in bed.
- 2 As soon as the puppy comes up to investigate the crate **REWARD**
- 3 If they want to keep investigating (while leaving the door open) **REWARD**
- 4 Present a chew toy to them - preferably a food puzzle that will take some time and work to get all the food out. Place it inside the crate, right at the door and use soothing words to encourage them to chew on their toy. **REWARD**
- 5 Place the chew toy further inside the crate and use soothing words to encourage them to go inside. **REWARD**
- 6 Repeat the exercise above, and this time move the door half way closed. **REWARD** and then open it back up again.
- 7 Repeat the exercise above, and this time move the door so it is almost closed. **REWARD** and then open it back up again.
- 8 Repeat the exercise above, and this time move the door all the way closed. **REWARD** and then open it back up again.
- 9 Repeat the exercise above, and this time close the door for a few seconds. **REWARD** and then open it back up again.
- 10 Gradually increase the duration of time you leave them in their crate until they finish their chew toy. **REWARD** and then open it back up again.
- 11 Gradually increase the duration of time to 5 minutes. **REWARD** and then open it back up again.
- 12 Gradually increase the duration of time to 15 minutes. **REWARD** and then open it back up again.
- 13 Gradually increase the duration of time to 30 minutes. **REWARD** and then open it back up again.

### TIP:

It is important to **REWARD** your dog before you open the door to let them out, so find a way to slip the treat into the crate without having to open the door.

### If you get stuck at number three, try this:

Play with the chew toy and your puppy next to the crate. When the puppy is showing keen interest in getting the toy, pop it into the crate and shut the door. When your puppy starts to eagerly paw at the door, open it and let them go inside.

The most important behaviour we are trying to achieve with this process is a positive association with the crate. At any stage your dog becomes distracted or stressed, take a break for as long as they need. The crate is not a tool used for punishment, otherwise they can develop a negative association with the crate and therefore not want to use it. Please keep in mind all dogs take to things differently and in their own time. To improve your chances of success, take into consideration the following factors that may hinder (or benefit) your training progress: the tastier the treats the better, the time of day, a calm and quiet atmosphere, is the crate placed somewhere the dog feels comfortable? If you set your training sessions up at the ideal time of day with the best treats and without distractions, you create the optimal teaching environment setting your dog up to successfully learn new behaviours.

