

Crate Training is one of the most important things you can do for your puppy

By Fawn Pierre

Crate Training is one of the most important things you can do for your puppy, not only will it ensure that your puppy is getting enough sleep (puppies need 18 hours a day with a an afternoon nap between 10/11 and 3/4 being absolutely necessary for your pups mental health!) it will also make your life easier and prepare your puppy for the times when confinement will be required; places like the Vet (the Vet wont walk around with your pup as he visits his patients or let him run around in the back office), the groomer, at a hotel, a friends house or a kennel (sorry but the cage-free kennel model is not a safe situation for any dog and when a young dog visits a new persons house all the rules he has learned at home usually are left at home!).

Crates help with housebreaking, avoiding separation anxiety, teaching puppies to settle down and remain calm and chill out in the house. Ideal times to crate your dog are endless.... while watching TV. paying bills, talking on the phone, eating dinner etc... Never, EVER leave your PUPPY unattended with unsupervised free run in the house...if you do and he pees or poops or destroys something you will get upset and that is not fair to your pup. It was you that left him unattended and thereby set him up for failure.

When people tell us crates are cruel, or their dog just doesn't like the crate we cringe and feel bad for the puppy (and the owner), because we know there will be several occasions in the dogs life in which he will be confined to a crate or cage. No fair stuffing him in a crate or cage only to have him feel anxious and trapped. That is truly cruel!

How To:

Sessions are repeated until your puppy is clearly playing "the game"!

Feed in or near the crate

Start out by tossing treats (or if he really loves his kibble use his daily ration) into the back of the crate. Use special treats and make sure you treat this as a fun game. If your dog is wary of the crate -- toss the treats close to the door and then just inside the entrance.

Gradually toss the treat further and further back. Each time he goes for the treat praise exuberantly...

With your pup outside of his crate, place a favorite treat or chewie inside the crate. Shut the door. When he begins to scratch at the door of the crate, open the door and

let him in to access the prize. If he brings the object outside of the crate, throw it back into the crate. Repeat this process until he settles down on his own in the crate. Do not shut the door yet!

Tell puppy "inside" and toss treats in crate

When puppy goes into crate, praise enthusiastically, pet and give treats until puppy exits crate

Completely ignore puppy when out of the crate (distinction is very important)

Repeat 20 times at least 3 times a day

When your pup settles down for at least 10 to 20 seconds without showing any kind of anxiety, close the door and latch it. Give him a treat through the closed door and open it back up again immediately. Repeat 10 times adding a second of duration before you offer the treat.

Increase duration to 1 minute.

Give chew toy that the dog enjoys the most in crate for one minute first with the door open and then, once he is settling in the crate with chewy, with the door closed. Open crate remove chew toy. Game over until the next time. If at anytime your pup seems anxious or tries to get out of the crate start over and this time proceed more slowly.

DO NOT:

Put your pup in the crate only when you leave the house. big mistake!

Only use it at night.

Use it as a punishment place

Force your puppy into a crate; it will only make see the crate as a scary place.

DO'S:

Feed your puppy in or near the crate

When your pup isn't looking place a few tasty morsels in the crate and let him find it on his own!

Place a stuffed Kong or chewie in the crate, show your pup, and then close the door so he can see the "treasure" just out of his reach. Wait till he is pawing at the crate to get in. Any time he goes near the crate praise like a Mariachi Band!

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