

CRATE & HOUSE TRAINING INSTRUCTIONS

Most dog owners and expert authorities such as breeders, dog trainers and veterinarians recommend dog crates as the best way to train a puppy. The purpose of a dog crate is to provide confinement for reasons of security, safety, housebreaking, protection of household goods, illness/injury or just plain general control. To the dog, the crate is not seen as a “cruel jail” but as a den that the dog seeks for security and safety. All dogs like to have their own special spot within the home. Unlike people, they do not object to being closed in a small area. They are actually much happier and more secure having their lives controlled and structured by humans, and would far rather be prevented from causing trouble than to be punished for it later! Be consistent, be firm, and know that a puppy needs to be kept out of trouble when left alone.

A young puppy 8-10 weeks old, usually has no problem accepting its crate as its “own special place”. Any complaining is caused not by the crate but by the puppy’s resistance to the controls of its new unfamiliar situation. Until the puppy is past the chewing stage, old towels that can easily be washed, and some freshly worn article of clothing, such a T-shirt or sweater, can be used as bedding. Do not put food or water in the crate. This encourages spilling and elimination. Do not crate a dog with a collar on because it could become hooked and present a choking hazard. Be consistent and patient. Establish a “crate routine” immediately and stick to it as closely as possible. A puppy should be taken outdoors to a specific bathroom spot after every meal, nap and a regular intervals in between. A good rule is to keep the puppy in the crate during any period when the puppy isn’t being directly supervised by a responsible person.

The use of the crate provides an easy means of housebreaking; total peace of mind when leaving the dog home alone; safety and convenience while traveling or in an unfamiliar location; and a handy time-out place when the household becomes hectic or the dog is misbehaving or underfoot. However, the dog crate was never intended for all-day everyday confinement. Should all-day confinement be absolutely necessary in order for a dog to remain in the home at all, the crate should be of more than adequate size. The dog should have plenty of room to move around, and have access to water.

A dog should be exercised vigorously before and after crating, and given plenty of “quality” time when the family is there. Ideally, someone should come in at mid-day to spend some time with the dog, and let it out for exercise. A radio or TV should be left on to provide some companionship when the dog is left alone for long periods of time. A bored, lonely dog is not a happy dog.

Most pet owners prefer an open wire type crate because it permits the dog to see everything going on (and feel like part of the family). The wire mesh also assures good ventilation and most wire crates can be folded flat for storage.

The crate should provide just the right amount of space for the optimum sense of den-like security and encouragement of bowel control, while allowing the dog to stretch out and turn around comfortably. Because the crate is generally purchased for the size your dog will be as an adult, a smaller space can be created for the puppy by using an optional wire divider or some other partition. This will assist in promoting bowel control since the dog will not desire to eliminate in its own space.

One of the main reasons for using a crate is to confine a dog without making the dog feel isolated or banished. As a result the crate should be placed in or near “people” areas such as a kitchen or family room.