



Crate Training Your Puppy

- Choose the appropriate size crate
- Confine your puppy in the crate whenever he is unsupervised
- Allow plenty of exercise and the opportunity to eliminate before and after he spends time crated
- Provide positive reinforcement each time your puppy enters
- Turn the crate into your puppy's kitchen as well as his bedroom
- Avoid using the crate for punishment

- In order to successfully crate train your puppy, the size of the kennel should allow enough space for the puppy to sit down, stand up, and turn around comfortably. Your puppy needs to learn that it is dirty and unpleasant to eliminate where he has to sleep. Being in a confined and secure area will help motivate him to avoid accidents while being crated. Kennels bought in early puppy hood need to be very small. A partition or barrier can be used to section off the appropriate portion of a larger kennel. As your puppy grows, the space allowed should increase as well. More room should only be given when your puppy is accident free. If soiling persists, remove the bedding inside the kennel. Accidents are much more offensive and difficult to escape this way.
- Your puppy should be confined to his crate whenever life finds you unable to watch him. This provides safety for the puppy as well as protection for your house and its contents. The majority of housebreaking setbacks occur when the puppy has had too much freedom to roam unsupervised. The kennel is a safe, secure and comfortable enclosure that is similar to a “den” in nature. Your puppy will learn to enjoy being in his “little house” while you are away. Expect some vocalization from your puppy; especially at the beginning. Never reward him by letting him out when he whines or cries. Often covering the kennel with a blanket can help to calm things down.
- Immediately when released, your puppy should be taken outside to eliminate. Most likely he will need to go because he is learning to “hold it” while inside his kennel. Give treats or praise as he eliminates in the yard. A puppy can understand the reinforcement of a behavior only ½ to 2 seconds afterwards. Rewards have to be timely to be effective. The goal is to reinforce the benefit of “holding it” until he gets outdoors.
- If a behavior has a positive consequence, it is likely to be repeated. Your puppy should always be rewarded for entering the crate. Use a food treat or a favorite toy to reinforce and to spark motivation to respond to the “Kennel” command in the future. Be overwhelming with treats and praise if your puppy initiates entering the crate as this shows progression in training. Be Proud.
- Hopefully your puppy will start to learn some respect for his personal space. However, to make a stronger point, you can feed your puppy his meals in the crate. The kennel will then represent his kitchen in addition to his bedroom. Dogs will rarely soil where their food is kept. Food and water with your puppy for free choice consumption. That would make “holding it” all day quite a challenge. You can anticipate your puppy’s elimination more effectively if you are aware of when and how much he eats and drinks.
- It is counterproductive to use the crate as a form of punishment while trying to train your puppy that there is no place he’d rather be. Social deprivation is the greatest form of punishment a puppy can receive. Confine him to an area where he is isolated for a short amount of time. Allow him to return when he has regained his puppy composure.