

## How to Crate Train

Crate training is extremely effective in protecting your dog from being too curious while you are not physically or mentally present, as well as to nurture proper potty training habits. Some think of placing an animal in a crate as cruelty because the animal doesn't have complete freedom; this is misguided thinking. There are countless stories of dogs ruining valuable items within a home while not being watched, or eating things that they should not that cause serious harm and even death. Something as simple as a sheet from your bed can be the demise of your dog, as it can block up your dog's intestines and cause serious problems if chewed up and eaten.

First and foremost, the goal is for your dog's crate to have a positive association. A great way to cultivate a positive association is to begin by introducing your dog and the crate with the door open. Give your dog tons of affection for walking in their crate or sleeping in their crate even with the door open. Feel free to place some of their favorite toys in their crate. When you intend on leaving your dog in their crate for an unsupervised period of time, make sure that you leave them with a parting gift like a frozen treat that will take time to lick through. I personally leave a toy filled with frozen peanut butter in my dogs' crate every time they are crated-my dogs salivate at the idea of their crate and are excited to go inside. This is what we want for your dog! ***My personal note here: It should be something that they only get in their crate and that they very much like. That way they don't think they can get it elsewhere. Note that kongs are a great tool to stuff yummy treats in. Nothing that can be shredded and ingested that could cause a blockage.***

Avoid placing your dog in their crate as a punishment-remember, we want their crate to have a positive association, not negative.

In order to maximize your dog's potty training, crate training will help! Whenever dogs wake up from sleep, they generally have an urge to go to the bathroom. By crating your puppy, your puppy will most likely go to sleep. When you take your puppy out of their crate, they will wake up and usually immediately have to go to the bathroom. This creates routine and predictability in their bathroom schedule and allows more positive association for going to the bathroom in the right spots.

*How long should your dog be in the crate?* Great question. It varies depending on age. According to the humane society, puppies under 6 months of age should not be crated more than 3-4 hours at a time.

When is it appropriate to stop crate training? Once you gain full trust that your dog will not put themselves in danger by destroying parts of your home and until fully potty trained.