

Crate Training Your Puppy

Teaching your puppy to love his crate.

Placing the crate in the room where the puppy will spend most of his time and allowing him to familiarize himself with it will make his first crate experience much easier. Once he sees that the crate is non-threatening, he'll be much more willing to step inside and get that biscuit that you placed in it. Now you can begin the training process.

Step #1: Tell the puppy Its cubby time! and place him in the crate with a treat. Shut the door and stay within his sight just outside the crate. Let him stay there for five minutes while you remain nearby but don't talk to him. At the end of the five minutes, release him and praise lavishly. If he fusses during the five minutes, do not release him. Simply tap on the top of the crate to startle him and when he stops whining momentarily, release him quickly and praise. You want him to realize that he will be released only when he's quiet. Otherwise, he'll think that fussing is his ticket to get out.

Step #2: Repeat Step #1 several times during the first day. Always wait for puppy where he can see you, such as in a nearby chair, watching TV or reading.

Step #3: The next day, place the puppy in his crate as before. Let him stay there for ten minutes this time. Repeat this step several times during the day.

Step #4: Continue to build time in 5-minute increments until the puppy will stay in his crate for 30 minutes with you in the room. Always take him to his relief area after a prolonged (20 minutes or more) period in his crate.

Step #5: Now go back to the beginning and let the puppy stay in his crate for five minutes, but now with you out of the room.

Step #6: Once again, build his crate time in 5-minute increments with you out of the room. When the puppy will stay willingly in his crate (he may even fall asleep) for 30 minutes with you out of the room, he'll be ready to stay in it for several hours at a time.

The primary purpose of crate-training any dog is to achieve house-training success. By letting the dog stay in his crate at sleeping time as well as when you leave him alone, you encourage him to remain clean in his den. He quickly learns to void outdoors, or on paper in the case of small dogs, while he keeps his sleeping and resting area clean. And as your puppy grows, he'll be able to stay in his crate for longer periods of time because his bladder and bowel muscles are developing.

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