



CRATE TRAINING YOUR DOG

When introduced properly, crate training can be very useful for many reasons. Some of the most common uses are for housebreaking or safely containing a dog when they are unsupervised. Crates can also become a safe place for dogs that are fearful. Please note that properly crate training a dog can take some time. Always be patient and consistent.

Choosing a Crate:

- ❖ It is important to choose the proper size for your dog. A proper sized crate should be just large enough for the dog to sit down, stand up and turn around comfortably.
- ❖ If you are crate training a puppy and do not wish to continue buying larger crates as the puppy grows, you can buy a crate with an adjustable divider.
- ❖ Choosing between a plastic crate and a metal crate should be based on the individual needs of your dog. Dogs that are crated because they are destructive when alone may do better in a metal crate as they may see plastic as a chew toy. While dogs that are fearful may feel too vulnerable in an open wire crate and prefer a plastic kennel.

Introducing a Crate:

- ❖ When first introducing a dog to a crate, keep in mind that it should always be a positive experience.
 - If your dog seems to really dislike the crate in the beginning, consider serving meals near the crate, gradually moving them closer over time, until the dog is eating their meals inside the crate comfortably. For tips on how to read your dog's comfort level, please see the "Body Language" handout.
- ❖ Find your dog's favorite treats and lead the dog over to the crate. Start by tossing a treat into the crate very close to the door. Slowly you can begin to increase how far into the crate you toss the treat, which will entice the dog to go further into the crate. Each time the dog is in the crate, reward them with a treat.
- ❖ Once your dog has learned to fully enter the crate on his/her own, you can start shutting the door. When the door shuts, the dog gets a treat. You should repeat this until your dog is comfortable with the door shut while you are close by.
- ❖ The next step will be leaving the dog in the crate for short periods of time while you are not in the same room.
- ❖ To help keep the crate a positive place, if your dog is not destructive, you can place a bed or blanket in the crate with some toys that your dog can play with when they are alone.
- ❖ Once your dog is comfortable for short periods of time in the crate alone, you can begin to increase the amount of time that the dog is alone.
 - Consider using a stuffed Kong toy to keep your dog relaxed and distracted while crated.

Things to remember:

- ❖ The crate should never be used as a place for discipline.
- ❖ Using a crate should become part of a daily routine to help your dog become more accustomed to using it.
- ❖ Remember that a crate is not a permanent living situation, it is a temporary place for your dog to be when alone for short periods of time.