



Crate Training

The many wonderful benefits of crate training become obvious with each day of use. Although many people share the secret of this wonderful product, others shy away from its use. Understanding crates from the dog's point of view illustrates why this device is so wonderful.

And wild canine will secure a small, snugly fitting space to call their own. This space represents security to the dog. In its den it can't be attacked or bothered, so it is able to fully relax. This instinctive desire for a secure den is the basis of psychology behind using a crate as a training aid. Once a pet owner understands the reasoning behind crate training, they can begin to enjoy the benefits themselves.

To accustom your dog to its new crate, prop open the door and allow them to explore the confines of the crate. Placing food or a favorite object inside will encourage them to step in. When the dog is comfortable, close the door and keep them confined for five or 10 minutes. When you let the dog out, do it unceremoniously. Releasing the dog should not be a major production.

Each time you put the dog in its crate, increase the length of time they are confined. Eventually the dog can be confined for up to four hours at a time. If the crate also serves as the dog's bed, they can be left crated throughout the night. Don't overuse the crate though. Both you and your dog should think of it as a safe haven, not as a prison.

Use the soothing effect of the crate to convey to your dog that it is bedtime. Many dogs will learn to go directly into their crates when they are ready to call it a day. Often the use of a crate will convince a restless dog to stop howling at the moon or barking at every little sound, allowing its owners to sleep through the night undisturbed.

Many dogs receive their meals in their crates. Finicky eaters are made to concentrate on their food that is offered and as a result, overcome their eating problems. For the owners of more than one dog, the crate serves as a way to regulate the food intake of the dogs. If dogs in the same household have different diets, crate feeding is almost essential. It can also make mealtimes less stressful if you have a dominant dog that tries to keep others in the household away from its food bowls. Housetraining is easier with the help of a crate. Until the dog is dependently housetrained, they should be given the opportunity to make a mistake. A healthy dog will not soil in its den—the place where they sleep. If the crate is the right size for the dog (allowing just enough room to stand up and turn around), they will not soil in their crate. If you purchase a crate for a puppy based on the size of a mature dog, you may need to block off one end to keep the puppy from sleeping in one corner and using the other corner for elimination.

Anytime you can't keep a close watch on your puppy, place them in their crate. With the assistance of a crate, housetraining can be painless for you and your dog.

The crate is a safety seat for a traveling dog. You may know that shipping a dog requires a crate, but did you realize that a crate is your car serves as a seatbelt and would protect your dog in the event of an accident? A dog thrown out of the car or through the windshield has little chance of survival. In the event you or a passenger needs medical care, a crate will keep the dog from "guarding" you from the paramedics.

If you must ship your dog by air, the task will be much easier if the dog is already comfortable in their crate. A crate-trained dog is relaxed and less likely to need sedation for traveling which removes one of the major risks of air travel for dogs. Your dog will be alert and happy when they land!

When you travel and must leave your dog behind, the caretaker will have an easier time caring for a crate-trained dog. They will appreciate being able to confine the dog for periods and when the dog is underfoot. Your dog will also enjoy being able to take their crate (a little bit home) with them if they must be at a strange place.

No untrained dog should be given the run of house while their owners are away. This is not only fool-hardy from the standpoint of protecting your belongings, but also from the standpoint of protection of the dog. An untrained dog could chew through an electrical cord, get trapped under a piece of furniture, or eat something that it's not supposed to. Use a crate to protect the dog from itself.

If your dog becomes ill or needs surgery, confinement in a crate will assure them the extra rest they need during the recovery period. A crate can also serve as a hospital bed.

In dozens of ways, the addition of a crate means better care for your dog. It allows for consistency in training. It helps the dog feel secure, and makes travel safer and more comfortable. Once you have experienced the benefits of crate training your dog, you'll wonder how you ever lived without one.

