



## Crate Training

**Crate Training** is essential for potty training and having a safe/quiet place to rest. It provides a way to transport your pup in a car and reduces chewing and destruction to your home.

- **Crate selection/size:** Puppy should be able to stand and turn around in, but small enough that the puppy can't designate an area for elimination. Wire crates allow for dividers so you can make 1 crate purchase that your pup won't outgrow.
- **Location:** Puppy will nap and sleep overnight in a crate. You may want 2 crates, one for the bedroom for night sleep and one for the main spaces for day naps. Puppies are social and don't like to be isolated so NO crates in the basement or remote rooms.
- **Bedding:** Put a towel in the crate. No soft bedding until you know your dog won't eat it.
- **Guidelines:** Puppies  $\leq$  6 months shouldn't stay in a crate for more than 3-4hrs. They can't control their bladders/ bowels for longer periods. If your dog is crated while you're at work and again at night, your puppy is spending too much time in too small of a space. To accommodate your pup's physical and emotional needs, consider an exercise pen, hiring a dog walker, or a dog gate to create a dog-friendly space/room with engaging toys, puzzles, chews, etc.

**Introducing the Crate:** Encourage your dog to enter the crate by placing kibble near it, then at the front, and finally to the back of the crate. If puppy refuses to go all the way in at first, that's okay– don't force it. Continue tossing treats into the crate until your dog will walk calmly all the way into the crate to get the food. Use an exciting voice and praise each step. If the puppy isn't into kibble or treats, try tossing a favorite toy in the crate.

**Mealtime:** Begin feeding in the crate. Put the food to the back of the crate. If your puppy is reluctant to enter, put the dish only as far inside as the puppy is comfortable going. Slowly move the dish further back in the crate. Once your dog is eating comfortably, close the door. Open the door once the puppy has finished. Next feeding, leave the door closed a minute longer.

**Teaching the Crate Command:** When puppy is visibly tired (after ~2hrs of being awake, after a training session, walk or any stimulating situation). Call the puppy over to the crate and give a treat. Point to the inside of the crate with a treat in your hand and say "crate". After your dog enters the crate, say "yes" and give a treat. Close the door. Sit quietly near the crate for 5-10min. Then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, and sit quietly again for a short time. Slowly increase the length of time you're away.

**Warning:** If the puppy whines/cries, do **NOT** let it out. Wait until the puppy calms and quiets and then you can let the puppy out of the crate to go outside and "potty". If you take the puppy out while crying/whining the puppy will learn that is the behavior to get out and will keep doing it.

### Tips:

- Play relaxing music with crate time. This helps calm pup & reduces background noises.
- **Always** take puppy outside to "potty" prior to crate time and upon waking up from crate time.
- Never use the crate as punishment! Do not hit crate or yell at puppy while crated- even if whining. Sit by the crate and reward your puppy thru the crate when they are calm and quiet.
- If puppy has a hard time settling down and must be crated you can offer a filled kong or dog chew in the crate to calm down, take a break/nap.

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