



## CRATE TRAINING

### **Why use a crate?**

A crate is a safe, secure area for your puppy to be, when you can't give him your full attention

It can help speed-up house training

It's somewhere for your puppy to go when he needs time out

It's a secure den for your puppy to retreat to, safe in the knowledge that he can relax and won't be disturbed. You must make sure children and other pets leave the puppy alone when he is in it.

It's the perfect way to protect your house and possessions from those destructive little teeth

It's a safe secure way to transport your puppy and keep your car clean

It acclimatises your puppy to a crate for visits to vets or groomers

It's ideal to use for those breaks away, because it'll be familiar to your puppy - and it'll keep your holiday home safe too

If introduced properly, dogs see crates as cosy dens – it's only humans that see them as prisons

### **How big should the crate be and where should it be?**

The crate needs to be big enough for your puppy to fit in comfortably when he is fully grown, that is, he has room to stretch out comfortably. There should be room for a water bowl and a toy or two.

The crate is best placed in a convenient part of the house, so your puppy can still see and hear what's going on, but where it's quiet enough that they can relax and sleep as well.

It's also a good idea to have it reasonably near a door to your yard or garden, so you can get outside quickly in the early stages and prevent any accidents.

### **How to introduce the crate**

The crate needs to be comfortable and inviting. Put a soft towel or vet bed in the base, or any suitable bedding that can be easily cleaned.

To start, leave the crate door open so the puppy is free to come and go. Play with tasty food treats, starting by dropping them by the crate, then in the crate near the door then gradually further back once your pup is happy going in. You can introduce a word such as "crate" or "bed" at this stage, so that he can begin to associate the word with the crate.

Do not rush this stage – if your puppy is not happy to go into the crate, don't force him. Take your time in 'explaining' to him that it is a safe and fun place. Most young puppies are very happy to go into the crate to explore.

Do this several times a day. Feed your pup their meals in the crate. Stuff a Kong with tasty treats and put that in the crate. If your pup is comfortable in the crate at this stage, you can push the door to, but stay around close to the crate so your pup doesn't think it's a big deal.

As long as your pup is comfortable, begin to close the door for short periods at a time. Make sure your puppy has toileted, so you know they won't need to go out for a little while.



It's also a good idea to have a little game with him first, so he is tired. Put a stuffed Kong in with him.

Then go about your day as normal with your puppy in the crate. If he begins to whine or bark, ignore him and only go back to him when he is quiet. If this happens, it usually means you haven't spent enough time getting him used to being in the crate, so go back a few stages for a day or two. Your puppy should quickly become happy to relax as soon as he enters the crate.

When returning to the crate to let puppy out, be calm and don't make it a really exciting time. Then take your puppy straight out to their toileting area. If you make this a routine, it helps enormously with toilet training.

Your puppy must not be left for hours at a time in his crate. Only use it for short periods – your puppy needs to be with you as much as possible. (For adult dogs, 3-4 hours being crated during the day is the absolute maximum.)

### **Night-time routine**

Once your puppy is used to the crate, they will happily sleep there at night. Puppies quickly learn to sleep through the night in the crate and are usually clean very quickly. It can really help to put the crate in your bedroom or just outside for the first few weeks.

If your pup does whine and fidget during the night, get up and take them to their toileting area, keeping it as calm and low key as possible. As soon as your puppy has performed, put them back to bed in the crate.

For the first few weeks, put some newspaper (or a puppy pad) in the base, separate from the vet bed (half and half if possible). If your puppy does need to toilet and you're not around, or don't wake up in time to take them out, they will not want to go on their bedding. Change it every time it is soiled. (Wait until your puppy is away from the crate, don't comment or criticise the puppy for using the paper/pad. Your puppy has to go somewhere if you are not there to let him out).

Most pups can go through the night without needing to toilet by around 13-14 weeks, so remove the newspaper or puppy pad at that time. Once your puppy can go through the night without needing to toilet, you can start to move the crate (in stages if necessary) to its permanent home.

### **Day to day use**

The crate must not be used as a punishment, but can certainly be used for time-out if your puppy has become unruly or is over-tired. Most puppies will quickly start to take themselves off to their comfy crate when they want a snooze, too.

It's also a good idea to use the crate at (human) meal times to avoid them pestering you – and it means you can happily relax and eat your meal without wondering what your puppy is up to! Give your puppy a stuffed Kong with part or all of their meal to keep them occupied while you eat yours in peace.