



Crating

New dog owners often want to crate train/housebreak their new pet.

Providing your dog with a crate can satisfy many dogs' need for a den-like enclosure. Besides being an effective housebreaking tool, it can also help to reduce separation anxiety in your dog, and keep them away from potentially dangerous household items or things he might tear up while you're away.

Purchase a crate that is the correct size for your dog. If your puppy will be a big dog, make sure the crate has dividers to move as he gets bigger.

Place bedding, like a towel or blanket, and a toy in the crate. Toys and balls should be inedible and large enough that your dog can't swallow them. If the dog chews the bedding, remove it to prevent swallowing or choking. Some dogs prefer lying on a soft bed while others prefer a hard or flat surface. If your dog eliminates on the towel, remove it until he no longer does. You may also put a guinea pig-type water bottle in the crate, particularly for longer absences.

To introduce your dog to the crate, and get him to associate it with comfort, security and enjoyment, follow these guidelines:

- When you are home with your dog, drop small pieces of kibble in the crate. While investigating the new open crate, they will discover edible treasures, thereby reinforcing positive associations with the crate
- Praise your dog when they enter the crate. Do not push, pull or force your dog into the crate
- Crate your dog for short periods of time while you are home. In fact, crate training is best accomplished while you are in the room with your dog. Getting them used to your absence from the room in which they're crated is a good first step. This prevents an association being made with the crate and you leaving them alone
- Puppies under 4 months of age have little bladder or bowel control. Puppies under 3 months have even less. Puppies under 9 weeks should not be crated, as they need to eliminate very frequently
- Always remove your dog's collar before confining in the crate
- Let your dog out to go to the bathroom before being crated
- Rarely does a dog eliminate in the crate if it is properly sized. If your dog continues to eliminate in the crate, it may be because he drank large amounts of water, has a health condition like a bladder infection or prostate problem, has severe separation anxiety, or has a poor or rich diet and/or has large meals. Consult your veterinarian if your dog exhibits these symptoms

Puppies that were kept solely in small cages at a young age, may be harder to housebreak using the crate training method due to their having been forced to eliminate in their sleeping area early on.

If your puppy messes in the crate while you are out, do not punish them upon your return. Wash out the crate using a pet odor neutralizer. Do not use ammonia-based products, as their odor resembles urine and may draw your dog back to urinate in the same spot.



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Never use the crate as a form of punishment or reprimand. This simply causes fear and resentment of the crate. Your puppy should be happy to go into his crate at any time. You may, however, use the crate as a brief time-out for your puppy as a way of discouraging nipping or excessive rowdiness.

Do not allow children to play in your dog's crate or to handle your dog while he/she is in the crate. The crate is your dog's private sanctuary. Respect his privacy.

In most cases a pup who cries incessantly has either been crated too soon or is suffering from separation anxiety. Some pups may simply be under-exercised while others may not have enough attention. Some breeds can be particularly vocal — mini pinschers, mini Schnauzers, frisky terrier types.

Follow these guidelines, and you will be well on your way to having a crate trained/housebroken friend and a happy you!