

Crate Training

Many people see crating their dog as a negative concept; however, it can be a very useful and positive tool for you and your dog. When conditioned properly, dogs will see the crate as a safe “den” area. Here are some helpful hints to successful crate training.

1. Acclimate your dog to the crate. Put fun toys in the crate, and leave the door open when you are home so your dog can go in and out freely. Make sure you remove any toys that need supervision before you leave the dog alone in the crate or kennel. Also, play with your dog by tossing treats in for her to get without shutting the door.
2. Always make sure your dog is tired when you put him in the crate. If your dog is tired, he will most likely sleep when you are gone.
3. When crate training puppies, sometimes it helps to put an old sweatshirt that smells like you in the crate so the puppy can still smell “you” when you are gone. For purposes of house training, the crate should initially be just big enough for your puppy to stand up, turn around, and lie down. If you have a larger crate, safely block off a portion of it to create a smaller space; extra room gives the puppy space in which to eliminate inside the crate. Adjust the space as your puppy grows. When the puppy is completely potty trained, she can have a larger crate with a little room to stretch.
4. New puppies will sometimes need a little extra help at night. Placing the crate in your bedroom initially can ease the transition from being with littermates to being with you. Once the puppy is happy about sleeping in the crate at night, you can gradually move the crate out of the bedroom to the permanent location. You may need to do this over a series of weeks depending on where you want the crate to be placed.
5. Get an appropriately sized “Kong” toy for your dog to use as a crate toy. These toys have a hollow middle that can be stuffed full of goodies. To begin, put your dog in the crate with the stuffed toy and leave the room only for a few minutes. Return to the dog while he is quiet and release from the crate before he finishes with the treats. Gradually increase the amount of time the dog is left alone.

Hopefully with these tips, your dog will be crate trained, and both of you will be happy about it!