

## Crate Training

Providing your puppy or dog with an indoor kennel crate can satisfy many dog's need for a den-like enclosure. Besides being an effective housebreaking tool (because it takes advantage of the dog's natural reluctance to soil its sleeping place), it can also help to reduce separation anxiety, to prevent destructive behaviour (such as chewing furniture), to keep a puppy away from potentially dangerous household items (i.e. poisons, electrical wires, etc) and to serve as a mobile indoor dog house which can be moved from room to room whenever necessary.

A crate also serves as a travel cabin for your dog when travelling by car or plane. Additionally most hotels which accept dogs on their premises require them to be crated while in the room to prevent damage to hotel furniture and rugs.

Most dogs which have been introduced to the crate while still young grow up to prefer their crate to rest or "hang-out" in. Therefore a crate (or any other area of confinement) should NEVER be used for the purpose of punishment.

### **Furnishing your puppy's crate**

#### **Toys & Treats:**

Place your puppy's favourite toys and dog treats at the far end opposite the opening. Toys and balls should be inedible and large enough to prevent being swallowed. Any fragmented toys should be removed to prevent choking and internal obstruction.

#### **Water:**

Water should **always be available** especially in hot weather.

#### **Bedding:**

Place a towel or blanket inside the crate to create a soft comfortable bed for your puppy. If the puppy chews the towel, remove it to prevent the pup from swallowing or choking on pieces. Although most puppies prefer lying on soft bedding, some may prefer to rest on a hard, flat surface and may push the towel to the end of the crate to avoid it. If the puppy urinates on the towel, remove bedding until the pup no longer eliminates in the crate

#### **Location of Crate:**

Whenever possible, place the crate near or next to you when you are home. This will encourage the pup to go inside it without feeling lonely or isolated when you go out. A central room in the apartment (ie living room or kitchen) or a large hall way near the entrance is a good place to crate your puppy.

#### **Introducing your crate to your puppy:**

In order that your puppy associates his/her crate with comfort, security and enjoyment please follow these guidelines:

1. Occasionally throughout the day, drop small pieces of kibble or dog biscuits in the crate. While investigating his new crate, the pup will discover edible treasures, thereby reinforcing his positive associations with the crate. You may

- also feed him in front of the crate, then right inside the door way and then finally in the back of the crate.
2. In the beginning, praise and pat your pup when he enters. Do not try to push, pull or force the puppy into the crate. At this early stage of introduction only inductive methods are suggested. Overnight exception: You may need to place your pup in his crate and shut the door upon retiring. (in most cases the crate should be placed next to your bed overnight. If this is not possible, the crate can be placed in the kitchen, bathroom or living room).
  3. You may also play this enjoyable and educational game with your pup or dog, without alerting your puppy, drop a small biscuit into the crate. Then call your puppy and say “where is the biscuit? It’s in your room”. Using only a friendly, encouraging voice, direct your pup towards his crate. When the puppy discovers the treat, give enthusiastic praise. The biscuit will automatically serve as a primary reward. Your pup should be free to leave the crate at all times during this game. Later on your puppy’s toy or ball can be substituted for the treat.
  4. It is advisable first to crate your pup for short periods of time **while you are home with him**. In fact, crate training is best accomplished while you are in the room with your dog. Getting him used to your absence from the room in which he is crated is a good first step. This prevents an association being made with the crate and leaving him alone

### **A Note about Crating Puppies**

Puppies under 4 months of age have little bladder control. Puppies under 3 months have even less, very young puppies under 9 weeks should not be crated, as they need to eliminate very frequently (usually 8-12 times a day).

### **Crating Duration guidelines**

9-10 weeks	Approx 30-60 minutes
11-14 weeks	Approx 1-3 hours
15-16 weeks	Approx 3-4 hours
17 + weeks	Approx 4 + hour (maximum 6 hours)

### **The crate as Punishment**

NEVER use the crate as a form of punishment or reprimand for your pup or dog. This simply causes the dog to fear and resent the crate. If correctly introduced to his crate, your puppy should be happy to go into his crate at any time. You may however use the crate as a brief timeout for your puppy as a way of discouraging nipping or excessive rowdiness.

*This information was provided by The American Dog trainers Network (<http://www.inch.com/~dogs/cratetraining.html>)*