

Crate Training Your Dog

Tips for getting your dog to love his crate

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Crate training is an often overlooked part of dog training which is unfortunate because a dog that is properly crate trained is much happier and more secure. In fact, dogs consider their crates to be their own special area where they can feel safe. I know my little Pomeranian loved her crate and whenever she felt threatened or scared, she would run right into the safety of her crate.

For some reason, people think it might be cruel to keep your dog in a crate but, in fact, it is anything but. Dogs love the security of a confined environment but you have to use common sense and not lock your dog in a crate for hours on end or expect him to enjoy staying in there when he really needs to go outside and do his "business".

Crate training can and should be a part of owning a dog. Whether your dog is full-grown or puppy, you should take the steps necessary to train him to love this crate and this in turn will make life a lot easier for both of you.

Why Crate Train?

As mentioned above, getting your dog used to going into a crate will provide him with a secure and safe haven. In addition, if you want to travel with your pet or simply just taken him to a veterinarian you may have to put him in a crate and if he's already used to the crate, this can be an added bonus. If your pet is in need of house training, a crate can help immensely.

If you're going on a trip with your pet, whether you are driving or taking a plane, you'll want to consider a crate. In fact, if you want to fly with your dog he will have to be in a crate and won't that be a lot easier if he already thinks of his crate as a safe haven? Getting your dog used to and even welcoming a crate will make it a lot easier when you have to travel.

And if you are not taking your dog with you on vacation, you might have to board him somewhere. And when he's being boarded, he's going to be in a crate or a cage. Of course, he'll probably be scared of this new situation and afraid because you aren't there, but if he's already used to being in the crate and considers it a safe place this will go a long way towards calming his nerves.

Crates can also help during house training. It is well-known that dogs will not soil where they sleep so if you want to keep your dog from going in the house, using a crate is ideal. However, it should be noted that you need to consider your dog's physical needs above all and you have to realize that he can only hold it for so long especially if he's a puppy. It would be cruel to put your dog in the crate for 10 hours while you are at work when you know he can only hold it for 5 hours. This would just be asking for failure.

Also, you want to pick a crate that is small enough so that your dog can't find a faraway corner to do his "business". Crates should only be used for house training if you can keep an eye on your pet and let him out when you notice he's exhibiting the signs that he has to go.

Having a crate available for your dog satisfies his natural instincts. In the wild, dogs like to live in dens or sleep in protected areas. Your dog's crate can act like den that provides him the security he needs right in your own home.

Picking The Perfect Crate

There are lots of different styles of crates on the market. It is important that you choose one that suits your dog. When choosing a crate make sure that it has an escape proof door and an open air design which allows maximum ventilation. A removable pan is also ideal for easy cleaning. Today there are lots of crates available, and you want to pick one that is perfect for your dog. One big consideration is the size of your crate in proportion to the size of the dog. You don't want it to be so small that your dog can barely turn around, but you don't want it to be too big either. The perfect size is one where your dog can stretch out and has enough headroom to stand up and turn around in but one that is still comfy cozy for your pet. Below is an example of a crate that is too big for the dog.



If your dog is still a puppy, you might have to consider buying a smaller crate for now and a larger one for when he grows to full size or try to find a crate that has a divider where you can make it larger as your dog grows.

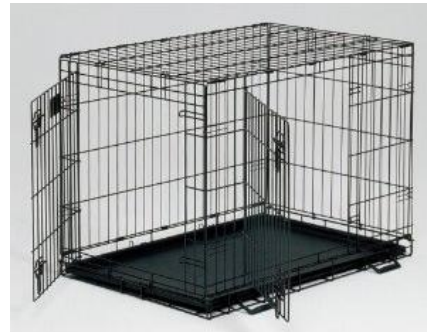
In addition to size, there are a lot of different materials available in dog crates.

When choosing a crate there are Three main types that are available. These are:

- Wire Crates
- Hard plastic Crates
- Soft Crates

Wire Crates

Wire crates are the type that are used in kennels and you also see them a lot at dog shows. These crates are simply wire all around and they usually have a plastic bottom that you insert so dog isn't standing on the wire which can really hurt his feet. These have an advantage because the dog can see out the top and all sides and you can always cover the top with a blanket or towel for more of a secluded feeling. These can actually be easier to clean out too, because you simply just slide out the tray on the bottom for cleaning.



The first wire crate we will look at are Black epoxy coated crates. They look great when they are new, but they chip very easily and look shabby after only a few uses. If you want good value for money, and you want a crate that will last a long time then you should avoid these. Dogs have also been known to chew the paint off of these crates.

Another thing to think about when purchasing a crate is that some come with thin plastic bases. Plastic bases often crack, and split and as well as this dogs often gnaw them, so in reality there

is no advantage to a plastic base except for saving the manufacturer a money on material costs.

Aluminum crates are really just for temporary use as they can be folded up and stored. They are easy to move around with you, so if you're going to visit someone and you want a crate that you can set up temporarily at your destination but won't take up a lot of room in the car this type might be a consideration.

Chrome cages are becoming less popular. They look great, at first and then you find they also chip and peel because chrome is just another coating. Be aware that the peeling chrome if ingested by a dog could harm and make them unwell. In fact you don't really see many chrome crates around these days which is a good thing. So what are you left with?

Well you are left with galvanized crates. These are by far the best option of wire crates. Galvanized crates do not rust or corrode. Look for galvanized crates that use 9mm gauge mesh. 9mm gauge wire mesh which has unbelievable strength and is by far the best to use as it lasts for a long, long time. Most galvanized crates can fold flat for storage when not in use.

Plastic Crates

Hard plastic crates are popular and a style that is necessary for dog travel. These crates are plastic on the sides bottom and top, usually with a metal



gate on the front. This is usually the kind that the airline requires, and probably what you'd want to use for car travel because they will be the most protective for your dog should an accident or rough travel occur. They can be a little secluded, however, because the hard plastic on the sides and top don't leave a lot of room for your dog to see out. On the other hand, your dog might like this because it offers a very private area. Make sure to look for a crate that has thick plastic to prevent your dog being able to chew it.

Soft Crates

Soft crates are great if you have a small breed dog and you want to take them to the store or to the vet or just visiting. They are not recommended for travel and I don't think too many of them would be approved by an airline anyway. They are also not good to have as a standing crate in the house because they are too flexible. These are typically made of some kind of nylon material with zippers on the top and a front zippered "gate" that you can use to take the dog in and out. You might want to have this type of a crate for carrying your dog around, but it isn't the style you would want to use for crate training.



When choosing a Crate look for these features:

- Anti-tamper locks
- Very heavy gauge mesh frame (preferably 9mm) Or
- Hard plastic
- Quick and easy Assembly
- Airplane safe

- Wont chip or flake
- Lasts for years
- Slide out tray

What To Put In The Crate

Now that you have your crate, you want to make it enticing for your dog. Let's face it, he's not going to want to go in and lay on the hard plastic bottom! You can outfit the crate with all his favorite things and make it comfortable so that he wants to spend more time in there.

One important thing is that you need to provide your dog with fresh water at all times and that includes when he is in his crate. However, the crate is a smaller area and if the water gets knocked over it could make the dogs bedding wet and make them uncomfortable. So, you need to take pains to find a water bowl that isn't easily knocked over and put it in a spot far away from where you put his bed.

Speaking of his bed, you want to make sure you put a nice comfortable bed inside the crate. After all, this is probably where your dog will be sleeping so you want to make sure he's is most comfortable! Plus a comfy dog bed will ensure that your dog wants to spend a lot of time in the crate and feels like it is his home.

You also want to put some toys in the crate so that your dog has something to do if you're not home and he gets bored, otherwise he might try to amuse himself by chewing on the crate!

Pick out some of his favorite toys and put them in so that he will have them with but be sure not to include toys that could be dangerous especially if you're not going to be around to watch your dog.

Introducing Your Dog To The Crate

Whether your dog is just a puppy or an older dog, the way you introduce your dog to the crate is critical to the success of crate training. This is not something that you can force, you have to take your time and go at the dog's pace because if your dog and his crate get off to a bad start he's never going to want to go in there.

The first thing you need to do is make the crate an attractive place for your dog to explore. Set it up in the corner that you intend to keep it in all the time. This would ideally be some place in the normal living area of the house like the living room so your dog can feel like he is part of the family when he is in the crate.

Put his favorite dog bed in there and maybe a couple of toys. Just set it up like this and then go about your normal business. Your dog's natural curiosity will have him checking out the crate in no time.

Whether or not your dog actually goes in there at first is up to him, but you must not force him to go into the crate. It's critical that he goes in on his own and in his own time. What you need to do is just leave the crate in its corner for several days and see how your dog reacts. This will get him used to the crate actually being in the house and eventually he might venture in to explore a little more. If he doesn't seem interested, you might need to lure him in there with a little treat but never force him in - this will just make him associate the crate with a bad experience.

You don't want to lock your dog in the crate when he first goes in there either. He needs to be able to feel like he can come and go

as he pleases - not that the crate is a prison. In fact, a lot of people just have the crate out and leave it open all the time and the dog comes and goes as he wants. However, if your dog is destructive during the day, and you intend to close them in the crate you'll need to give it a few weeks so that he is perfectly comfortable in there before you actually lock him in.

It's important to note, that you should never use the crate for punishment. If your dog does something bad DO NOT send him to the crate. If you do this he will associate the crate with punishment and who wants to spend time in a place that they associate with being punished? If you start on this bad habit, you will have a hard time getting your dog into the crate no matter what your intentions.

Crate Training Steps

Crate training can take days or weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament and past experiences. It will be well worth the time and effort you invest. Just like with any other type of training, crate training should be based on reward and not punishment. The first step as outlined above is getting your dog used to having the crate around in his environment. Next, you should get him inside the crate and used to staying inside the crate. This process may be different depending on your dog's personality but generally you could use the steps below.

First of all, I should note that you must make sure that your dog doesn't have to go to the bathroom if you're planning on keeping him in the crate for any length of time. You should pay particular attention to this if your dog is a puppy because they simply can't hold it for as long. Once you know your dog's regular routine and when he does his "business" you will have a good idea of when it is "safe" to put them in a crate.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves, first we need to get to the stage where he actually goes in on his own and spends some time in there. Here are some steps you might try in your crate training endeavor:

Step 1: Introduce your dog to the crate

Place the crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time, such as the family room. This way the dog feels part of the family when in his crate and not excluded in anyway. Put a

soft blanket or towel in the crate. Take the door off and let the dog explore the crate at their leisure. Some dogs will be naturally curious and start sleeping in the crate right away. If yours is not one of them, try the following:

- Bring the dog over to the crate, and talk to them in a happy tone of voice. Make sure the crate door is open and secured, so that it won't hit your dog and frighten it.
- Encourage your dog to enter the crate by dropping some small food treats nearby, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. If your dog refuses to go all the way in at first, that's okay; don't force them to enter.
- Continue tossing treats into the crate until your dog will walk calmly all the way into the crate to get the food. If your dog isn't interested in treats, try tossing a favorite toy in the crate. The next time he wants to play he will likely go in to get the toy. Of course he'll probably come right back out but at least you made a little bit of progress. This step may take a few minutes or as long as several days depending on your dog.
- Definitely do NOT force your dog into the crate at any stage or vent your frustrations on them if they are not entering the crate at. Some dogs naturally take longer to adjust to new situations
- It's important not to shut the door yet because you don't want to scare the dog and make them feel imprisoned. So just keep repeating this step until the dog stays in there for longer and longer periods of time.

Step 2: Feed your dog all its meals in the crate

After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding it all regular meals near the crate. This will create a pleasant association with the crate.

- If your dog is readily entering the crate when you begin Step 2, place the food dish all the way at the back of the crate.
- If your dog remains reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far inside as your pet will readily enter without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed your dog, place the dish a little further back in the crate.
- Once your dog is standing comfortably in the crate to eat their meal, you can close the door while it is eating. The first time you do this, open the door as soon as your dog finishes its meal. With each subsequent feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer until they stay in the crate for ten minutes or so after eating.
- If your dog begins to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving your dog in the crate for a shorter time period. If your dog whines while in the crate, don't let them out until they stop. Otherwise, your dog will learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine. Again, you must be firm in your approach during these phases of training.

Step 3: Lengthen crating periods

After your dog is eating their regular meals in the crate with no sign of fear or anxiety, you can confine them there for short time periods while you're at home.

- Call your dog over to the crate and give it a treat.
- Give your dog a command to enter, such as "Kennel" or "Crate." Encourage your dog by pointing to the inside of the crate with a treat in your hand.
- After your dog enters the crate, praise them, give them the treat, and close the door.
- Sit quietly near the crate for five to ten minutes, and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a short time, and then let your dog out of the crate.
- Repeat this process several times a day, gradually increasing the length of time you leave your dog in the crate and the length of time you're out of his sight.
- Once your dog will stay quietly in the crate for about 30 minutes with you mostly out of sight, you can begin leaving them crated when you're gone for short periods of time and/or letting your dog sleep in the crate at night. This may take several days or several weeks depending on your dog. Make sure you stick with it and be consistent!

Step 4, Part A: Crate your dog when you leave

After your dog can spend about 30 minutes in the crate without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving them crated for short periods when you leave the house.

- Put your dog in the crate using your regular command and a treat. You might also want to leave your dog with a few safe toys in the crate.

- Vary at what point in your "getting ready to leave" routine you put your dog in the crate. Although they shouldn't be in a crate for a long time before you leave, you can crate them anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes prior to leaving.
- Don't make your departures emotional and prolonged—they should be matter-of-fact. Praise your dog briefly, give them a treat for entering the crate, and then leave quietly.

When you return home, don't reward your dog for excited behavior by responding to them in an excited, enthusiastic way. Keep arrivals low key to avoid increasing their anxiety over when you will return. Continue to crate your dog for short periods from time-to-time when you're at home so it doesn't associate crating with being left alone.

Over time, your dog will become more and more familiar with his crate and you'll see that he starts going in there by himself.

Crate Training Puppies At Night

Put your dog in the crate using your regular command and a treat. Initially, it may be a good idea to put the crate in your bedroom or nearby in a hallway, especially if you have a puppy. Puppies often need to go outside to eliminate during the night, and you'll want to be able to hear your puppy when it whines to be let outside.

Older dogs, too, should initially be kept nearby so they don't associate the crate with social isolation.

You can move the crate elsewhere later on but to start off for it will help if the crate is beside your bed. You must remember that your puppy just came from sleeping with his mother and a litter of pups, he will be used to hearing their breathing throughout the night. Although sleeping in the crate may seem foreign at first to your puppy, sleeping by your side will help him adapt to his new crate much faster.

Puppies can hold it for longer at nighttime, so you will be able to leave him in his crate for longer than you would in the day, but you must keep an ear out for fidgeting.

To prevent your puppy wetting the bed you should take his water away from him two hours before bedtime. You must also take your puppy outside to relieve himself before you put him to bed. It is important that you maintain a schedule, dogs adapt quicker when to situations that are predictable. If you find he is still wetting the bed throughout the night it is okay as your puppy is still young. In the morning make sure his bedding is washed and crate is cleaned. This is because when pups smell the toilet that is

where they will keep going. You can also set an alarm clock and get up and take your puppy out twice a night until his bladder can hold longer.

Once your dog is sleeping comfortably through the night in their crate near you, you can begin to gradually move it to the location you prefer, although time spent with your dog—even sleep time—is a chance to strengthen the bond between you and your pet. This is very important indeed!

Separation Anxiety

There are many ways to cure dog separation anxiety. Too much in fact to be covered by this book. However I will try to cover the main causes of separation anxiety in dogs.

It is not fully understood exactly why some dogs suffer from separation anxiety and, under similar circumstances, others don't. Separation anxiety can be seen in animals from multiple or single-pet homes. It may be more likely to occur in animals with a history of abuse or of multiple homes. Dogs that have missed out on normal social interaction with people or other animals, especially as puppies, may also be at increased risk.

Separation anxiety typically occurs in the following cases:

- A dog has never or rarely been left alone or the ones that were not properly integrated into their first home and got relegated to a basement, garage or yard.
- Following a long interval, such as a vacation where the owner and dog were constantly together.
- After a traumatic event (from the dog's point of view) such as a period of time spent at a shelter or boarding kennel, or an event that occurred which was a significantly frightening experience for your dog.
- A dog that has never had a prior problem may develop separation anxiety when there is a change in the owner's work schedule.

These are some common symptoms of Separation anxiety

Whining, barking
and howling

Pacing and
hyperactivity

Excessive salivation

Scratching, chewing
and digging

Urinating or
defecating

Destruction of
personal items or
household objects.

Anxiety Wraps

A pet anxiety wrap is a recent invention that attempts to help in many ways with regards to not just separation anxiety but other behavior conditions and phobias faced by pets.

The theory behind pet anxiety wraps is that dogs require different ways to learn from past experiences. Apart from the normal method of training pets, which is reward and punishment, there are exceptions faced by dogs whose past experience has been very harrowing and present fears are so overwhelming that they are unable to focus to get trained to avoid separation anxiety. This is for especially the young ones who have had previous pet owners who have not been caring enough or have had terrible experiences while separation from biological mother at the time of birth or similar other experiences that could have led to phobias or separation anxiety and other such anxieties.

A pet anxiety wrap is a fabric tool that increases the positive effects of sensations that are sent by the brain's receptors. A certain level of "maintained pressure" is applied continuously to calm frustrated nerves. The effect is similar to that of stroking and patting down a dog.

No matter the authenticity of the manufacturers' claims, anxiety wraps are marketed with a note that they are a tool to be used in conjunction with other training techniques and not as a standalone remedy for all anxiety-related undesirable behaviors.

Anxiety wraps handle major triggers of anxiety in dogs such as separation, thunderstorms, fireworks, car rides, strangers, unexpected loud noises, injury or other disruptions to a dog's life. Wrapping is similar to swaddling an infant and uses a technique called "maintained pressure," first developed by Dr. Temple Grandin. Temple Grandin's "hug machine" was developed after seeing how cattle would calm down while being put into a squeeze chute to receive their shots. The hug machine was based on the same principle to treat the anxiety resulting from her own autism. Her "hug machine" functions by maintaining a constant pressure on the body, leading to a reduction in anxiety. Similar pressure helps the dog become calm when fearful, anxious or hyperactive.

Linda Tellington-Jones' "TTouch" technique, designed as a way of relaxing and training horses and eventually adapted to dogs as well, sometimes utilizes an ace bandage wrapped around the animal. Body wraps are also used to extend the benefits of the other aspects of the treatment.

Things one will need:

- "Ace" or elastic bandages; or
- Strips of cloth; or
- Snug t-shirt; or
- Spandex tank top

In this book I will only cover the Ace or Elastic Bandages. For more information on dog separation anxiety and how to fit the other anxiety wraps I would highly recommend this book:

For best results, I recommend the purchase of a professional dog anxiety wrap product.

My recommendations are:

1. An Anxiety Wrap made by the company Animals Plus. These are high quality wraps that come in a range of different sizes so you can find one that fits your dog perfectly. You can click on the following links to shop for a [Toy-Plus](#), [Mini-Plus](#), [X-Small](#), [Small](#), [Medium](#), [Large](#), [X-Large](#) or [XX-Large](#) version. These wraps are great value and may just do the trick for your dog.
2. The ThunderShirt™. This is an excellent product for anxious dogs, especially for curing symptoms arising from loud noises such as thunder or fireworks, or for those dogs that get anxious when travelling. It has received critical acclaim and has been successful in curing separation anxiety in many dogs of all breeds and upbringings when used as part of a holistic treatment program. As with the Anxiety Wrap,

the Thundershirt™ comes in a range of sizes. Click on the following links to shop for an [X-Small](#), [Small](#), [Medium](#), [Large](#) or [Extra Large](#) Thundershirt™ depending on the size of your dog.

Using An Ace Bandage To Create An Anxiety Wrap

A visual representation of this process is provided below

Step 1

Start by putting the wrap on your dog when it is in a relaxed state, either from a massage or after a meal, so your dog begins to associate the wrap with relaxation.

Place the middle of an elastic or "Ace" bandage across the dog's chest. Bring both ends up and cross them over the shoulders, like wrapping arms around someone in a hug. The wrap will "connect" all parts of the body: front, back, right, left, top, and bottom. The wrap needs to be snug, but check it periodically to be sure it doesn't interfere with movement or circulation. The illustrations here are for a Half-wrap, but some practitioners might also use a Cross-wrap.

Step 2

Cross the bandage over the top of the shoulder blades; this is a point of balance in 4-legged animals.

Step 3

Next, cross the loose ends of the bandage under the belly.

Step 4

Tie the loose ends over the top of the lower back. There should be a uniform pressure around the entire bandage. As

the hair compresses you may need to re-tie the wrap to have a good fit. The wrap can also be hand-decorated as per the owners' needs!!

When finished, the figure-8 wrap surrounds the dog with comforting pressure. The wrap may only be needed for a few minutes or it can be left on as long as necessary to relieve fear, tension, or anxiety. Dogs with thunderstorm phobia may have a new confidence once the wrap is applied. Try it on more than one occasion if you are not satisfied at first. You may also treat with a Bach Flower Remedy for emotionally challenging situations. There are Flower Remedies for other symptoms like fear, shyness, grief and many other destabilizing emotions or behaviors.



Crate Training an older Dog

Not all older dogs have been house broken. Housebreaking an older dog will be much easier with the use of simple crate training techniques. Crate Training an older dog is relatively the same as crate training a puppy. Sometimes it is easier but sometimes it is harder depending on how the dog was raised.

Adult dogs have the ability to hold their bladder for longer periods of time than puppies, so sometimes housebreaking an older dog can be easier than housebreaking a new pup. The main problem you will have is teaching them when and where to defecate and urinate. To do this you will have to take them outside when they need to go to the toilet, this is usually just after playing or just after waking up from a sleep.

To crate train you will just need to go through the same steps as a puppy. If you have a shelter dog you will need to be extra careful not to rush the first steps as they can often have bad memories of cages and this can sometimes be hard to break.

Conclusion

Crate training a dog is important, not only to help in-house training but also keeping your dog from destructive behavior when you're not home, but also for his own safety.

If you can get your dog to go in his crate happily on command, you can make sure that you have him in a safe spot should there be any sort of emergency in the home, or if you are traveling and have him what the crate.

Crate training is an important part of dog training and you should seriously consider adding it to your dog training regimen, using the steps above you will see how easy it is to give your dog a place of his own where he can feel safe and secure.