

## CRATE TRAINING (ADULT DOGS)

### Why crate train your dog?

Because a crate is a terrific training and management tool. It is useful for house-training, brief alone-time, settling, any form of travel, and it's part of a well thought-out emergency plan should your dog have to be crated in an emergency. Most importantly, a crate teaches your dog to hold it when he has to go to the bathroom. A crate helps your dogs in many ways.

### Is using a crate cruel?

Absolutely not. A crate can be your dog's favorite place in the world. Use treats, praise, and toys to make your dog love his crate.

Just remember never to use the crate for more than 3-4 hours at a time, except for bedtime.

### Getting your dog used to the crate.

Step 1: Begin crate training right away—preferably the first day your dog is in your home. Toss tasty treats into the crate to see if your dog will walk in on his own to get them. Do this repeatedly without closing the door or hovering over the dog or near the crate. Just toss in the treats and walk away. *If you notice your dog is hesitant about sticking his head into the opening of the crate, place the treats just inside the crate to make it easier. Then gradually place the treat further and further into the crate.* Praise your dog when he goes in to get the treat. Make it fun, like a game.

Step 2: When your dog is comfortable going into the crate, start feeding him *delicious meals* (water-soaked kibble with wet food or other dog-safe add-ins) by placing them toward the back of the crate if your dog is comfortable going into the crate so he has to walk in to eat. Like Step 1 with the treats, if your dog is hesitant about walking into the crate, place the meal close to the entry of the crate and gradually move it further back as your dog becomes more comfortable. *Don't close the door.* Break up his meals into several feedings to practice.

Step 3: When your dog is able to walk into the crate (all 4 feet) and has eaten 5-6 meals in the crate with the door open, try closing the door. It is important that your dog doesn't think you're leaving; we don't want him to associate a closed crate door with you disappearing.

Step 4: When your dog is comfortable eating in the crate with the door closed, go back to tossing a treat into the crate and practice closing the door for 1-2 seconds, then treat him through the door. Let him back out. Repeat this step many times, gradually building to 10 seconds.

Step 5: Stuff a Kong with something very yummy or use a special bone that will take a lot of time to chew. Put the treats in the crate. Shut the door. Move about the house normally. Let your dog back out after 5 minutes or when he finishes his treat. Don't make a fuss over him. Repeat this step several times, varying the length of your absences from 1 to 20 minutes.

Step 6: Next, leave your dog in the crate with something delicious while you leave the house for short errands, like getting the mail or watering the garden. Gradually build your absences.

## CRATE TRAINING (ADULT DOGS) CONTINUED

**Training Tip:** When you plan to crate your dog for longer than an hour, make sure he is well exercised and ready for a nap.

**Troubleshooting:** If your dog is going to the bathroom in his crate, remove any bedding and make sure he has been pottied before you put him in the crate, and that he is not being left for too long. Make sure you are following the rules for good potty training. If all else fails, **call us**.

**Troubleshooting:** If your dog is having problems acclimating to a crate, it may be helpful to keep track of when you're putting him in the crate and for how long so you can make sure you're gradually increasing the amount of time.

### NOTES: