

# CRATE TRAINING 101

Crate training takes advantage of your dog's natural instincts as a den animal. A wild dog's den is their home—a place to sleep, hide from danger and raise a family. The crate becomes your dog's den, where they can find comfort and solitude while you know they're safe and secure (and not shredding your house while you're out running errands). Below are tips for making crate training a positive experience for both you and your dog.

## CRATE TRAINING TIPS:

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- Your main goal should be making sure your dog sees the crate as a positive place to spend his/her time.
- To facilitate a positive introduction, avoid using the crate as a form of punishment.
- Name your crate! Then be consistent. Suggested names include, "crate", "home", or "bed." It should be something that allows your dog to understand what you mean easily. Use the name every time you are working on crate training or putting your dog in the crate.
- Feed your dog meals in the crate. This creates positive association with the crate. If your dog avoids going inside the crate because he is scared, start by placing the bowl right inside the crate door.
- Play a game of search...Toss a yummy treat into the crate so your dog goes inside to receive the reward. You could also play a game of fetch by tossing a toy inside the crate so your dog has to step in to retrieve it.
- Using a blanket or sheet, cover the crate so it feels more like a den area. This will also help to block out any light shining through windows to create a relaxed atmosphere.
- Practice shutting the crate door for only a few minutes at a time. If your dog seems content, increase the length of time. Never open the crate door if your dog is whining or barking. Doing so communicates and reinforces this behavior positively.
- To desensitize your dog to being alone in the crate, progressively step out of the room and increase the length of time. Start with 10-15 minute intervals, but increase the time as you work with your dog. After the completion of the exercise, and as long as your dog is quiet, let them out of their crate. During training exercises, it may help to provide your dog with a durable chew bone or a stuffed KONG. If these toys provide positive results, reserve them for when your dog spends time in the crate.
- In the beginning use old linens in your dog's crate. If your dog goes potty on the linen or uses it to cover up accidents, take any linens away. Leaving your dog with nothing dry to lie on will deter them from going to the bathroom in their crate. Removing linens leaves your dog to deal with the consequences of having to sit in a soiled crate. Most dogs will be discouraged by this situation and refrain from going to the bathroom in the crate. If your dog proves the ability hold potty breaks until they are outside, resume use of linens as bedding in the crate. If your dog tears up the linens, do not use anything as choking can be a direct result of swallowing strings or stuffing.
- Play soft music at a low volume while your dog is crated or during the training process. Music helps to block outside noises, and decreases your dog's assumed behavior of needing to be on alert.
- Close all of the curtains and blinds. Leaving the daylight shine in will only increase his urge



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to stay awake.

- Pay attention to your actions before you leave and when you return as they can make or break crate training. If you're about to put your dog in the crate but make a huge fuss over him first, this will cause your dog to become excited. These loving intentions will cause more harm than good as your dog will not be in a calm state of mind going into the crate. Instead, you should remain very calm when you are telling him to go to his crate. The same is true when you arrive home. A huge, animated reunion may cause your dog to bark or jump with anticipation. Your dog may even decide to go to the bathroom in their crate out of pure excitement. After your dog has been taken out of the crate and outside to go potty, then you can reward your dog with love and attention.