

Crate Training

Benefits

Proper crate training can provide a multitude of positives to your and your dog's life. When a positive relationship is established with the crate, dogs can find a sense of security much like children find comfort in their bedrooms. The crate becomes a place where they can rest undisturbed which encourages calm, relaxed behavior. Owners can find peace of mind in knowing their dog is not getting into trouble when they are not supervised (i.e. at work, at night, while cooking, etc.). Housebreaking also can become easier as the dog has limited space to relieve themselves when you can't be attentive. Most dogs have a natural instinct to keep their sleeping quarters clean, so by keeping a dog in their crate when you aren't supervising, the dog is less likely to have accidents in their crate. The general rule of thumb is a puppy's age in months correlates to the number of hours the puppy can hold its bladder (i.e. a four-month-old puppy should be able to hold its bladder for four hours).

Buying the Right Crate

There are many crates on the market right now, and it may be overwhelming to decide the right style and right size for your pup. The three most common styles are soft-sided, wire, and plastic. Soft-sided crates are best for travel – sporting events, camping, vet visits, etc. – as they are not suitable for long periods of unsupervised confinement. Wire and plastic crates are both sturdier than fabric, soft-sided crates and each have advantages. Wire crates are often collapsible for convenient storage, however this may make them easier to escape from. Plastic crates take up more space, but typically have solid sides which can create a sense of privacy that some dogs enjoy.



A dog's crate should be large enough for them to comfortably turn around and stand up in. Any extra room may impair housetraining, as your puppy may use the extra space as a potty area. Some crates come with dividers that can be added to create a smaller space until the puppy grows to fit the size of the crate. Once a dog is housetrained, their crate can be larger as the risk of accidents in the extra space is low.



Animal Matters Training & Swim

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Creating a Positive Association

Introducing a pup to a crate should be a gradual process and should not be rushed. The first point of exposure can begin with simply tossing a treat in the crate and leaving the door open. Once the dog appears comfortable entering the crate, continue the process of throwing a treat inside the crate but begin to close the door for a few seconds before letting the puppy out.

You can also ensure that your puppy continues to enjoy being in their crate by making good things happen while in it. This can include giving meals, food dispensing toys, bones or safe chews, or dropping treats in the crate. We want to make going in the crate as positive of an experience as possible, which can be aided by exercising and ensuring your puppy has relieved themselves before crate time and by providing enrichment to keep your puppy from becoming bored and anxious in the crate.



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