

Crate Training Instructions

Crate training is very important to the well being of your dog. It keeps your dog safe when you're not at home, gives a feeling of security, inhibits bad habits such as chewing and soiling in the house and it allows you to help your dog feel at home at the vet, the groomer or when traveling.

Using a crate is also the easiest and **most effective way to housebreak** your dog. It is important to realize that crate training as a young pup will help your dog throughout his life even when he is no longer using the crate on a regular basis.

Even if your dog isn't going to use the crate on a regular basis, please crate train your dog!

Dogs have a natural denning instinct. That's what makes crates so effective. But your dog also wants to be close to you so he sometimes appears as though he doesn't like his crate. Your job, as you train your dog how to behave in the crate, is to teach him the crate is safe and comfortable and no harm will come to him by being separated from you. As a matter of fact, he will learn that proper behavior is what will lead to his eventual reunion with you.

The #1 rule of crate training is to **never let the dog out of the crate when they are showing any signs of distress**- barking, whining, panting, pawing or pacing- unless it is an emergency. If you wait until they are calm, they will learn that calm behavior is the key that will get them out of the crate.

As a puppy, the crate should be bare. Puppies will chew up beds and blankets and can choke on them. The material also absorbs urine keeping the crate comfortable place if there is an accident, delaying the housebreaking process. If you need something soft for your puppy, please consider a pad that is waterproof. The crate is a quiet, calm place and there is no need for toys.

Here are the instructions:

1. When you put the dog in the crate, do so dispassionately. Don't show any signs of stress or guilt and do not try to make it "fun". Say "Crate!" or "Kennel up!" as you put the dog in, close the door and walk away.
2. Ignore the puppy while he is in the crate especially if he is crying. Wait until the first break in whining or barking (at least several seconds) and open the crate. As the puppy comes out, say "Good dog!" and give him a treat. Don't

make a big deal out of it- just the treat and a happy "Good dog!" Never give a dog a treat until he is out of the crate.

3. Put the puppy in the crate several times during day when he's ready for some sleep. Puppies sleep most of the day. That means they can spend a good amount of time in the crate as long as they get lots of play and potty breaks.
4. At night you are going to put the puppy in the crate after his last potty break. He may whine and cry but you need to ignore him. Don't tell him to be quiet or even look at him- these are all rewards for dogs. It's bedtime and he will eventually go to sleep. When you go to bed, you may want to put a fan or white-noise maker by your head and put a blanket over the crate to reduce the puppy's sounds. It's okay to put the crate in another room to sleep.
5. During the first few months, you will need to get up to take the puppy outside at night. Just like human babies, their bladders can't hold it all night long. To keep from having to take them out while they're whining, set the alarm clock at regular intervals. As the puppy gets older the intervals are set further and further apart until the puppy will sleep through the night.
6. Continue to put the puppy in the crate from time to time throughout the day when you're home so he doesn't associate the crate with you leaving for long periods of time. Just 5 or 10 minutes to start is good then working up to 30 minutes. Remember not to let the puppy out if he's barking whining, panting, pawing or pacing.
7. Although you should never use the crate as punishment, you can use it proactively to help keep your puppy safe and you sane. Some examples of when you can put your puppy in the crate are when you eat, when you bring in groceries so he doesn't run out the door or when you're trying to get some work done and the pup will get in the way.
8. The maximum amount of time a puppy can spend in a crate without a break is one hour for each month plus one. So if your puppy is 3 months old, he can stay in the crate for 4 hours ($3+1=4$) or at 6 months, 7 hours ($6+1=7$). If you work, come home at lunch, ask a neighbor or family member or hiring a dog walker to give your puppy a mid-day break.
9. Never, ever let the puppy out of the crate if he is whining, barking, panting or pacing.

If you have questions about housebreaking or any other training issue, please call Pup Scouts at (713)468-7877.