

CRATE TRAINING

Crate training is an effective way to train your dog. Crates are a useful training tool for helping with housebreaking, safe containment when left alone, deterring destructive behavior and more! By crate training your dog or puppy, you will provide them with a safe, cozy place. Crate training is also excellent for transporting your animal safely from one place to another.

Things to Know Before Crate Training

- Crates can be easily misused. It is essential to use the crate as a positive reinforcement training tool and not a negative one.
- Make the crate fun and exciting. You should never force your dog/puppy into the crate without proper training.
- Your dog/puppy may prefer an airline carrier type of crate or a wire crate. Work with your dog/puppy to see what works best for your them.
- Your goal of crating should be to address any behavior problems or training your dog/puppy.
- Crates come in all shapes and sizes. The size of the crate should be based on the size of your dog/puppy. There should be enough room for them to stand up, turn around in a small circle and lie down comfortably.

Set A Location & Set Up

- Designate a place for the crate in your home. Do not place it close enough to furniture or drapery that the dog/puppy may be able to reach it. It needs to be a quiet area in which the dog/puppy isn't getting over stimulated.
- Put the crate in its designated area and leave the door open giving the dog/puppy a chance to investigate the new object and lessen the potential for fear. Ignore the crate for a few hours. Do not attempt to put the dog/puppy inside at this point.
- Place their favorite toy into the crate and leave it there for them to retrieve. Do not speak to the dog/puppy. Stay relaxed and observe only. If they will not go inside to get their toy, place a small amount of their food inside and observe only. If the dog/puppy is still too afraid to venture in after the object, put their favorite food treat inside. Stay relaxed and watch only.
- Once they have gone inside, do not shut the door or overly praise them. Either action will startle them. It is crucial that your dog/puppy not feel pressured to go into the crate.

Making Your Animal Feel Comfortable in the Crate

- The next step once your dog/puppy is comfortable going in and out of the crate on their own is to begin shutting the door with your dog/puppy inside. Do this quietly and calmly so they do not feel trapped. Do not latch the gate. Shut it and immediately open it again, allowing them to step out.
- Take them outside to go potty. When you bring them back in, repeat prior step by leaving the door shut just a little longer than the first time and latching the gate. If they become stressed, stop the exercise for the day.



Increase Crate Time

- Gradually increase the amount of time your dog/puppy is in the crate until you can leave them in it for 1-1/2 hours at a time without them becoming upset. After they are comfortable being in the crate for that period, you are safe to leave the house. Crate training may take time, but your peace of mind is worth it!
- Below is a guideline to how long a dog/puppy should be in a crate without having any breaks during the training period.

Week of Crate Training	Maximum Time in Crate
1st Week	1-3 Hours without receiving a break
2nd Week	4-6 Hours without receiving a break
3rd Week	6 Hours without receiving a break
4th Week	8 hours without receiving a break

- When training puppies, you should start slowly by only putting the puppy in the crate for 30 minutes to an hour without a break. You can increase the time as long as the puppy is tolerating the crate well. If you are crating your puppy during your workday, it is essential that you give your puppy a midday break. Expect accidents during the training process.

- When crating an adult dog for up to 8 hours, it is essential that you give your dog adequate exercise before and after work. You also should give your dog a mid-day break. If you are unable to go home on your lunch break, you could always hire a dog walker to come by and give your dog a break!
- Never punish your dog or puppy for having accidents in the crate.

Troubleshooting Crate Training

Although your dog/puppy may be making noise while in the crate you should resist correcting them by yelling. To ensure crate training is a positive experience for your dog/puppy, give them a frozen peanut butter Kong before placing them in the crate or give them their favorite Nylabone to chew.

If your dog/puppy is experiencing separation anxiety or being extremely self-destructive while in a crate, please seek help from a professional trainer or reach out to HSHC's Behavior Department for suggestions and helpful tips.

There are times that you should not use a crate. Below is a list of times that you should not use a crate.

- Dogs that are too young to have sufficient bladder or bowel control
- The dog is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea
- The dog has not had enough exercise before going in the crate
- Damaging or breaking out of the crate
- Wet chest/fur or a lot of wetness on the bottom of the crate from excess panting
- Your dog moves the crate while you are not home
- Excessive barking or howling during your absence crate.



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With patience, time, and motivation you can crate train your dog in no time! If you are experiencing difficulty with crate training, we ask that you reach out to HSHC's Behavior Department for guidance.