

# **CRATE TRAINING**

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## **West Wind Dog Training**

Crate training is not cruel nor should it be punishment for Puppy. A crate the proper size for Puppy is: a safe place to be while sleeping; safety when you are not around to watch him; a place to eat uninterrupted; a place to go to get away from it all. Dogs are den animals and many like a place they can curl up in and feel secure.

### **WHY USE A CRATE?**

You can leave Puppy or Doggy home alone with peace of mind. He is comfortable and not forming bad or destructive habits. He also is not going to be confused by your reactions to bad behavior when you return. Remember, dogs do not have the reasoning humans do. When we return and see the garbage rooted through and then punish Puppy, chances are he will not realize what you are punishing him for. He may think you are punishing him for something completely different. Crates also make house training easier. Puppies and dogs generally will not soil their sleeping and eating area. However, puppies from pet shops have often learned to tolerate crate soiling. Used with a consistent schedule, a crate can be your best ally with house training. Crates offer safety when traveling. A dog in a crate is far less likely to be injured in an accident. A crate keeps your dog from bouncing around, getting on your lap, blocking your view or even getting under the driver's feet! If crating while driving is not possible, at least train Puppy to lie quietly in the back seat or use a doggy seat belt available at many pet supply places.

### **WHAT A CRATE IS NOT!**

A crate is not a substitute for human companionship. Use of a crate should be limited to no more than eight hours, less for a younger animal. If your work schedule is longer than that, consider getting a dog walker to exercise Puppy or Doggy for you midday. There are also Dog Day Care centers cropping up! Crates are not to be used for punishment. The crate must be viewed by Puppy as a safe place to be. Do not allow your children to torment Puppy while crated. Make sure he has fresh water, a sturdy bed and safe toys (rotate toys daily so he always has different ones and a different combination).

### **HOW TO MEASURE A CRATE.**

If buying for an adult dog, get a crate big enough that he can fit in from tip of nose to base of tail (a few inches longer in each direction). He should be able to stand up, sit, turn and lie down on his side stretched out comfortably. If buying for a puppy, get one that will fit him as an adult. Some manufacturers even make crate dividers so you can expand

the crate area as Puppy grows. If in doubt of size, I opt for the next size up. A crate slightly too large is better than one too small!

#### WHERE TO PUT THE CRATE.

Put the crate in a people area such as family room, kitchen or even the bedroom. You do not want your dog to feel banished when crated so the cellar or garage is no good.

#### WHERE TO GET A CRATE.

Many pet supply and feed stores carry crates or you can mail order them. Do not be put off by the cost - crates are far less expensive than replacing a shredded couch or even carpet cleaning by a professional company. Some crates are quite reasonably priced. You can even find them at yard sales! (Make certain all the hardware is there and the door latches correctly and securely). PetsMart, PetCo, various pet supply and feed stores generally carry crates. If you wish to check out mail orders, a few places to get catalogs from are: Cherrybrook 1-800-524-0820, [www.cherrybrook.com](http://www.cherrybrook.com); Mid-West Metal Products, 1-800-428-8560; Doctors Foster & Smith, 1-800-826-7206, [drsfostersmith.com](http://drsfostersmith.com); Pet Edge, [www.petedge.com](http://www.petedge.com). Or else, check out your local dog shows. Often vendors selling a myriad of doggy items will be there. I have purchased many an item from dog shows - including crates! For a list of upcoming dog shows nationwide, check out [INFODOG.COM](http://INFODOG.COM)!

#### INTRODUCING THE CRATE

First, remove your dog's collar so he will not get caught. It happens rarely, but why take the risk. NEVER crate a dog with a choke collar on. Choke collars should NEVER be used for everyday use - they are for training and walks only, then should be removed. The same for a pinch collar! Set up the crate in the place you wish to keep it. Encourage your dog or puppy to enter the crate by enticing him with bits of food. Use something he cannot resist like cooked chicken or hot dog slices. Praise as he enters. Let him walk in and out a few times. Now start to encourage him to lie down quietly and relax. Give him a couple safe toys and close the door. Sit with him and talk softly. Let him out. Now start to leave for a short time. Even if he cries and whines, do not weaken. It will teach him that whining gets me out. We want him to learn that quiet gets me out – unless of course he is signaling to potty! He should adjust to the crate eventually. Just keep making it a positive experience.

#### HOW LONG TO USE THE CRATE.

Some dogs can never be trusted with run of the house unattended. Some dogs are fine. If you think your dog is able to behave uncrated, begin testing by leaving him loose for five minutes while you walk outside. If that works, increase to ten, fifteen and so on. Should he begin to misbehave, continue using the crate. It is safer for Doggy and saner for you!

#### CRATES AS A HOUSE TRAINING AIDE.

Always have a feeding and potty schedule for your puppy or adult dog. This makes house training much easier. If you are not able to be with Puppy, put him in the crate. Take him out on lead and encourage him to go potty. Once he does, praise lavishly and bring back inside. Should he not go, put him back in the crate ONLY if you cannot watch him and try again in a little bit. Dogs do not like to soil their beds as a rule. Should he soil the crate, take him out while someone cleans the crate. Do not punish for eliminating in the house unless you catch him in the act. DO NOT rub his nose in it or hit him. Just give a loud, firm, growly "AAAAAH! NO!!!" and get him out immediately. Try to get him to potty outside and then praise lavishly when he goes. Remember, the younger the Puppy, the smaller the bladder capacity. It is unreasonable to ask a young puppy to hold an eight-hour day. Consider a dog walker for a midday potty break. Sometimes older dogs have bladder control issues. Sudden house soiling in a dog without problems could be a sign of an underlying problem such as a bladder infection. Unaltered or spayed dogs are also more apt to soil in the house. Males if not neutered have a greater chance of wanting to mark their territory and may do so inside. I also know females who mark. Do not paper train or use those pads designed for puppy to eliminate on. This only teaches Puppy it is OK to potty in the house. Paper training could actually delay house training.