

Crate Training

Crate training is a valuable tool to keep your dog safe, support potty training, and provide a space where they can rest and unwind.



Step 1: Prep The Crate

1. **Choose the Right Crate:** Select a crate that is large enough for your dog to stand, turn around, and lie down comfortably.
2. **Make It Inviting:** Line the crate with a comfy bed or blanket. Leave the door open and place treats, toys, or a favorite chew inside to encourage exploration (with supervision).
3. **Think About Placement:** Typically it's best for the crate to be in a quiet place where your pup can relax and not be distracted. You can also use a blanket to cover the crate.
4. **Encourage Relaxation:** Playing white noise or music can help drown out distracting or scary noises. Scents and relaxing pheromones can also promote relaxation.

Step 2: Create Positive Associations

- **Feed Meals in the Crate:** Feed your dog inside the crate to build positive feelings.
- **Use Special Toys:** Offer toys or chews that are only available in the crate with supervision.
- **Reward Exploration:** Let your dog sniff and enter the crate at their own pace. Reward them with treats and praise whenever they interact with it.
- **Tie the Verbal Cue:** Use a cue like "Kennel" or "Crate" when encouraging your dog to go inside with tossed treats. Once your dog goes in the crate, click or say "yes!" and give another treat.

Step 3: Build Up Time Gradually

- **Start Small:** Once your dog is comfortable, you can increase duration. When your dog goes into the crate, start to delay the click or "yes" by a few seconds. Then start closing the door for short periods (15-30 seconds) while you're nearby. Gradually increase the duration while rewarding calm behavior.
- **Increase Distance:** Leave the room briefly while your dog is in the crate. Return to open the door while your dog is calm. Gradually extend the time.
- **Be Consistent:** Make crate time part of your dog's daily routine including for meals, naps, and enrichment.



Tips for Success

- **Never Use the Crate as Punishment:** The crate should always feel like a safe, happy place.
- **Exercise First:** A tired dog is more likely to relax in the crate. Provide physical and mental stimulation before crating.
- **Keep It Positive:** Use treats, praise, and calm encouragement to create a positive experience.
- **Don't Rush:** Take your time to build positive associations.
- **Limit Extended Confinement:** Dogs need time outside the crate for exercise, play, and bonding. It is recommended to keep puppies in their crates for no longer than 1 hour per month of age, with a maximum of 4-6 hours before they need a break.

What If My Dog Whines or Barks?

- **Be Proactive:** Let your dog out of the crate before they hit their limit. The goal is for your dog to never experience stress in the crate.
- **Reward Calm Behaviors:** Avoid letting your dog out while they're whining, as this can reinforce the behavior. Request a calm behavior like sit or down first, and then release them from the crate.
- **Check Their Needs:** Ensure your dog doesn't need to potty, isn't hungry, and isn't overly bored or anxious.

Resources

- [Kikopup - Crate Training Part 1](#)
- [Kikopup - Crate Training Part 2](#)
- [Fear Free Happy Homes - How to Crate Train Your Dog or Puppy](#)
- [Grisha Stewart - Empowered Crate Training](#)

With patience and consistency, your dog will learn to love their crate as a safe and comfortable space. If you're facing challenges or need personalized guidance, book a training session or reach out for help!