



Crates are a wonderful tool to use with your dog. They can be used to confine your dog while you are away to prevent destructive behavior or potty accidents. They can be a safe place for your dog to escape to, like a doggie bedroom. Slow introduction and positive associations are key to having a successful crate training experience.

Make sure the crate is large enough for your dog to stand, turn around and lie down in. If they have the opportunity and the crate is too large, they may choose to use half for a potty spot and the other for sleeping.

Begin training by leaving the door open at all times and let your dog explore it at his own pace. You can hide treats in there when he isn't looking, or toss treats while he is watching so he learns the crate equals good things. Put some of your dog's favorite toys in there. You can give pig ears, or stuff Kong's with treats or peanut butter. You can even start feeding meals in there. Never force your dog into the crate! This will scare your dog and give him a negative association with the crate, hindering training.

Put some food in there once he is comfortable exploring the crate on his own. Start closing the door for short periods of time. After he is finished eating, let him out immediately. Gradually work your way up to latching the door shut. You can slowly extend the amount of time he is left in the crate after his meal. Go about your business as usual throughout your house.

Start slow while you're at home. It's important to remain home when you begin crate training and that you slowly increase the amount of time your dog is in the crate. If you force him then leave he might cry and try to escape. We want to teach him that the crate is a safe, wonderful place to be where he gets treats and toys and that you will eventually return.

Praise him before letting him out of the crate. If you notice your dog is uncomfortable with being locked in the crate after his meal and begins to fuss or whine, do not let him out just yet. Ignore him, look away, or walk away. When he is calm, even just for a few moments, verbally praise him and release him from the crate. Your dog will learn calm and quiet behavior gets the door to open.

Do not make your departure dramatic. After your dog has become comfortable you can start leaving the house for short periods of time, such as running an errand. Do not make your departure or arrival dramatic. This will intensify his feelings. Remain calm when you leave and arrive. Only acknowledge your dog when he is calm and collected. Praise him and let him out of the kennel.

Exercising before crating can help. High-energy dogs might benefit from the opportunity to relieve themselves and get some energy out before going into the crate.

Ask for help if you need. If you work long hours and are still in the process of crate training, there are many other options you can use such as a dog walker, doggy daycare or friends and family letting your dog out for a break.