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Crate Training

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Crates are a great housetraining tool because they take advantage of the dog's natural reluctance to potty in its own sleeping area. They can also help reduce the possibility of destructive behavior when your dog is left alone.

Buying a crate

For potty training purposes, you want to get a crate that is just big enough for the dog to stand, sit down, lie down, and turn around comfortably. If you have a large breed puppy or a puppy that you expect to grow a lot you may need to purchase several different crates as the puppy grows or you can purchase a wire crate that comes with a divider.

Teach your dog to love the crate

Crate should be used as a rest place that indicates to the dog that they should lie down and take a nap. At night, allow your dog to sleep in their crate. If your dog whines, barks, or scratches the kennel, ignore the behavior until he is quiet. Once he is quiet you can take him out but most puppies will learn to settle in the crate and go to sleep after a few nights.

Throughout the day drop yummy treats into the crate. This should cause any inquisitive puppy to investigate the crate and not feel nervous about going in and out of the crate on their own. After your dog has adjusted to going in and out of the crate during the day and is sleeping in the crate at night it might be time to crate him periodically during the day. You can start with short amounts of time while you are in the home and while you are out of the home.

During the learning phase it is important to never push, pull, drag, or force your dog into the crate. If your dog is reluctant to go in the crate, try feeding them their meals inside the crate.

Using the crate for training

If you are not able to watch your dog you should put them in the crate. This will keep your dog from roaming around, getting into things that they shouldn't get into and learning bad behaviors. For smaller dogs and puppies, you can also use baby gates and pet exercise pens for larger safe confinement areas.

Crates should only be used for 1 hour for each month of the puppies life. (2 months = 2 hours, 4 months = 4 hours, 6 months = 6 hours) up to 8 hours. Crating should be limited



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to 8 hours where possible. If you need to be away from home longer than this, consider enlisting the help of a neighbor, friend, or dog walker to let the dog out during the day.

For behavior and training advice, please contact Operation Kindness at behavior@operationkindness.org or visit www.operationkindness.org/training.