

CRATE TRAINING

A Simple Guide to Help Your Dog Feel at Home

Crate training can be one of the most helpful tools for setting your dog up for success—whether you're working on house training, building a routine, or helping them settle into a new home. At its core, crate training is about giving your dog a safe, quiet space that's just theirs.

Why Crate Training Works

Many dogs naturally enjoy having a cozy, den-like area to retreat to. When introduced the right way, a crate becomes a safe and comforting place, and a predictable spot to decompress and feel secure.



What Crate is Best for my Dog?

Your dog's crate should be big enough for them to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably. Wire crates, plastic travel crates, or soft-sided options can all work well. Just make sure the space feels secure, not isolating, and matches your dog's temperament. If your dog is still growing, consider a crate with a divider so you can adjust the space as they grow.

Step 1: Set Up & Build Positive Associations

Set the crate up in a quiet part of the house. Leave the door open, toss in treats, or feed their meals inside to build positive associations. Fill the crate with favorite toys or soft bedding to make the space inviting. Let your dog explore the crate at their own pace.

Step 2: Short Crate Session

Once your dog is comfortable going in and out of the crate on their own, you can start introducing short periods with the door closed. Here's how:

- Begin with just a few minutes. Start with 5–10 minutes while you're nearby, then slowly increase the time
- Use a high-value treat or toy. Give them something special they only get in the crate, like a stuffed Kong or a favorite chew.
- Gently guide them in. Use a treat or cue word like "crate" to encourage them. Never force them in.
- Praise and stay calm. Always praise them for going in. Keep your energy calm to help them settle.
- Keep it low-pressure. Don't make a big deal when leaving or returning—this helps prevent anxiety.

Step 3: Make It Part of the Routine

Create a routine where the crate becomes part of daily life. Crates are great for naps, meals, downtime, and overnight sleep. Predictability helps dogs feel secure, especially during transitions or after adoption.

Tips for Common Challenges

- Wait for quiet before letting your dog out to teach that calm gets rewarded, not whining.
- Never use the crate as punishment—it should feel safe and positive.
- Go slow; some dogs need time to adjust.
- Be patient and consistent—progress takes time, but routine and praise help.