



Crate Training

This protocol will help your dog get used to and feel comfortable with their crate.

Getting started:

Most dogs learn to love going in and being in a crate as it becomes a space of comfort and safety for them. Before training begins, make sure that you have the appropriately sized crate for your dog and for their needs. If you are using the crate for housetraining purposes, then the crate should be big enough for your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down again without any restrictions. If your dog is already housetrained and the crate is being used for other purposes, such as separation from other animals, management for destructive chewing, etc., then the crate can be much bigger.

Be sure that you make the crate a super-comfortable place for your dog to be: lots of blankets and bedding and toys and treats that they may get exclusively while in the crate; many dogs also prefer to have a sheet or blanket draped over the top and sides to enclose the space even more. Lastly, *the crate should only be used for positive reinforcement, never for punishment.*

Teaching the behavior:

The table below breaks down the progression to practice to desensitize your dog to the crate. Some dogs will pick this up very quickly, while others may need some extra time. Keep training sessions short (5 to 15 minutes, depending on what step you're on and how your dog is responding), and stop at the first signs of any stress. **Don't move on to the next step** until your dog is completely calm and relaxed, not showing any signs of stress or reluctant behavior on the current step.

Push= move on to next step

Stay on current step if not meeting criteria needed to push

Drop to previous step if you start seeing signs of stress

Training Progressions:

Step	Directions	Notes
1	Leave crate door open and throughout the day, randomly drop treats at the back	Push after 3 observations of no waiting for you to toss in treats
2	Lure dog into crate, feed at the back (toss treat), let dog exit at will	Push on 5/5 times of your dog entering crate without hesitation
3	Lure dog into crate and continue flow of treats (about 1 second apart) as long as dog stays in crate (still let dog exit at will)	Push on 1 minute without an exit
4	Hand-signal dog into crate and continue flow of treats (about 1 second apart) as long as dog stays in crate (let dog exit at will)	Push on 1 minute without an exit
5	Hand-signal dog into crate and feed and continue flow of treats (about 2 seconds apart) as long as dog stays in crate (let dog exit at will)	Push on 1 minute without an exit
6	Hand-signal dog into crate, close the door halfway, feed, let dog exit	Push on 5/5 times
7	Hand-signal dog into crate, close the door, feed, open door and let dog exit	Push on 5/5 times
8	Hand-signal dog into crate, close the door for 2 seconds, feed, let dog exit	Push on 5/5 times
9	Hand-signal dog into crate, close the door for 3 seconds, feed, let dog exit	Push on 5/5 times
10	Hand-signal dog into crate, close the door for 5 seconds, feed, let dog exit	Push on 5/5 times
11	Hand-signal dog into crate, close the door for 10 seconds, feed, let dog exit	Push on 5/5 times
12	Hand-signal dog into crate, give stuffed Kong or other special chew object, close door, and hang out next to crate for 10 minutes, dropping treats in every 20–30 seconds	Do 4-5 times over 2 or more days. Push if no delay going in and no signs of distress
13	Start a new session and repeat step 12, but now occasionally get up and leave kennel, returning within a few seconds.	Same as Step 12
14	Start a new session and repeat step 13 but now for 30 minutes and feeding less frequently (every couple of minutes).	Same
15	Start a new session and repeat step 13 but now for an hour feeding less frequently (every few minutes).	Same
16	Start a new session and repeat step 13 but now for two hours and feeding less frequently (every 5-10 minutes).	Same
17	Leave dog in a covered crate with stuffed Kong or other special chew object while you leave the kennel for 30 minutes.	Same
18	Repeat step 17 for one hour.	Same
19	Repeat step 18 for two hours.	Same

