



GREATER BIRMINGHAM
HUMANE SOCIETY

Pet Resource Library Crates101

When introduced properly, your dog will view his crate/kennel as his own personal safe place and a great place to be. Crates are a great tool used to help house-train your puppy or new adult dog, provide a great resting place and keep your dog out of trouble when you cannot watch him. Crates come in two basic types: wire or plastic. Both crates can work well, and the choice is based on your personal preference. The crate should be large enough for your adult dog to stand, sit, turn around and lie down comfortably. If you have a puppy, buying a crate that will fit him as an adult and partitioning it to reduce size will save you from having to upgrade as he grows. Creating a positive association with being in the crate is the key to successful training. Below are some training suggestions:

THINGS THAT CAN HELP

- Put surprise treats in the crate for him to find and encourage investigation.
- Feed your dog his meals in his crate. Alternate between keeping the door open and closed while he eats.
- Toss favorite toys in the crate and allow your dog to get them and bring them out.
- Give your dog special treats to focus on while he's in the crate, such as a chew or Kong. Only use these treats in the crate to keep them special.
- Start by closing the door for short periods of time and increase slowly with the dogs comfort level

THINGS TO AVOID

- Don't force the dog into the crate, as this can create fear and dislike of the crate.
- Don't shut the door the first time puppy goes in. This can cause him to panic.
- Don't let the dog out when he's whining or crying - this teaches him these behaviors get him out and will encourage him to do them. Instead, open the door when he's calm and quiet - even if it's just for a moment.



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CRATING FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME

- Before your dog has earned the freedom of your house, there are going to be times when he needs to spend an extended time in his crate. Help set him up right with these helpful suggestions:
- Allow your dog to relieve himself in the appropriate outside spot before crating.
- Provide him with proper exercise before and after being crated.
- Provide him with a busy toy to occupy him, such as a stuffed Kong or Nyla-Bone.
- Leave the TV or radio on - this will help block out outside noises that can cause concern to your dog.

KEEP IN MIND

Dogs should not be kept in a crate longer than 8 hours. Puppies need to be let out to relieve themselves more frequently than adults. As a general rule, puppies can stay in their crate the number of hours equal to their age: 2 months = 2 hours. Dogs are social creatures and being stuck in a crate away from their family can be stressful. When you're home, give your dog attention and teach him how to behave as a member of the family.