

# CRATE TRAINING

**Giving your puppy/dog a crate as his home (den) for his life is a great kindness.** The crate will become his safe haven. No matter where the crate is placed it is his home. If you travel, your dog will be safe and at ease at friends, in a motel, while being kenneled.

**Crate training is the best solution for managing house breaking and chewing for puppies.** It is the time-out location where children may not bother the dog. The crate allows you to restrict without punishing, but only if you positively train your puppy or adult dog to it's benefits.

## **Teaching the puppy that the kennel is home:**

- 1. Feed your puppy in the crate** with the door hooked open. As you put the food down say the dog's name, and "Crate".
- 2. Toss toys or food** into the crate when playing. Door is hooked open.
- 3. Hide bits of food in crate** when puppy or dog isn't looking so they go into crate to check for "good" things. Use the crate as the dog's toy box so he'll go to the crate to find his toys.
- 4. After exercise** , put a special food treat\* in the crate with the puppy and lock the crate while you work in the same room. Release puppy after a 5-10 minutes or when it wakes up. Never release if it is crying. Be sure that you crate your dog for varying lengths of time when you are at home. While you watch TV or are making supper or working at the computer - put your puppy in the crate so he learns that you aren't always leaving when he is crated.
- 5. Crate the puppy with a special food treat\*** whenever you leave him alone in the house. Be very matter of fact. Always use the same phrase whenever you leave. Something like "In your crate now, I'll be back soon". And then leave house for a few minutes at a time to start. Work up to a 1/2 hour. It is very important to vary the length of time you are gone. By changing the length of time you are gone from 5 minutes to 30 minutes to 10 minutes and so forth you will help the puppy to not worry about how long you will be gone. When you come back in, take 5 minutes to change your clothes, etc. and then release puppy from crate ONLY if he is being quiet. Then go outside with puppy, put on his long line and let him do all his bathroom business before playing.
- 6. Never leave your dog alone in the house unless he's crated.** You will have little trouble housebreaking or preventing chewing if your puppy is either always in your sight (and mind) or in his crate. When your puppy is between 6 - 10 months old you can now start leaving the crate door open for short periods of time when you are at home or at night. Slowly begin leaving your puppy with the crate door open for longer periods of time. If chewing behavior starts up, drop back to leaving the puppy locked in the crate. Begin again with short periods of open door crate time. And again leave him crated for different lengths of time – varying between short and long periods of time.

\* **Special food treat:** Use a marrow bone that is very strong about 3"- 4" long (you can buy these at a good pet store). Stand it on end in plastic dish, fill it with nonfat yogurt and freeze it. Give it to your puppy or dog while in their crate when you leave. It will occupy,

distract and clean their teeth all at once. Also you can refill it and freeze it again.

**Special Note:** If your puppy needs to be crated and is having trouble settling down and can't stop fussing or crying, then place a towel over the front door of the crate. This will be a cue for your puppy that when the towel is there, he will remain in the crate. Never lift the towel off and release the puppy from the crate unless he is calm and quiet. Putting the towel on at night is a great way to say lights out.

## HOUSE TRAINING

**Housetraining**, not housebreaking, is the process of teaching through management and positive reinforcement that a "special" place outdoors is his bathroom.

**Teaching your puppy or an older dog to urinate and defecate outside requires managing by:**

- 1. Restricting access to food and water.**
- 2. Knowing where the puppy/dog is ALL THE TIME.**
- 3. Crating your puppy/dog when you can't have them in view.**

**A puppy has a very small bladder and digests his food quickly.** Also he won't develop complete control of the sphincter muscles until he's about 15 weeks. So avoiding in-the-house accidents requires getting your puppy outside frequently. That may be as often as every half-hour if your puppy has been playing a lot and drinking a lot.

**Your puppy will need to go out after eating, drinking, and play activity.** So by managing these three behaviors you will quickly housetrain your puppy. Consult your breeder, vet, or dog trainer to be sure you are feeding the appropriate amount of food. Your puppy has a small stomach so it will need to be fed three times a day for ?. The amounts of food shown on the back of puppy chow are frequently too much food. A fat puppy is not necessarily a healthy puppy. What goes in must come out, so about 15 minutes after a meal your puppy will need to go out. Do not free feed your puppy or dog. Put his food down and allow 5 minutes to finish it. If the food is not eaten, pick up the dish and feed the correct serving at the next mealtime. Free feeding makes housetraining very difficult. Your puppy should have constant access to clean water. But this means you must know when and how much he is drinking. So if you can't see what your puppy is doing, you must put him in his crate. Restrict access to food and water intake after 6 p.m. and you will soon eliminate any middle of the night wakeup calls.

**Play activity** stimulates the need to pee and poop. So even if the puppy hasn't just eaten or drunk, but he has been running around, take him out!

**The Ritual of Going Out:**

**Put your puppy on a long line or leash, and say, just as your reach for the doorknob, "Do you have to go out?"** Then open the door and take your puppy to the same "bathroom" spot every time. When you get there you can use a phrase like "hurry up" that will later become a cue to use anywhere. Allow your puppy 2-3 minutes to accomplish his business. Don't move around or talk to the puppy or show him any toys. Using his bathroom is the job at hand. Calm, quiet, expectant waiting is what you need to project. The moment the job is accomplished, lots of praise and food treats and even a little play as you move away from the "bathroom". As your puppy develops attention skills, you can begin to teach him how to ring a bell to go out (see the separate handout).

**Your puppy will try to let you know that he needs to go out.** Watch for sniffing the floor anxiously, circling, hunting for a private corner, and even whining - all are signs of needing to go out. If your puppy is signaling you this way, he is ready to learn how to ring the bell to go out.

**If you need to houstrain an older dog,** follow use all of the above procedures with the addition of always having the adult dog on leash attached to you or in the crate when in the house. The adolescent or adult dog who is not houstrained must never be out of sight or out of reach when indoors.

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