



**FOLLOW THE
LEADER **K9****

CRATE TRAINING

Crate training is fundamental to success when it comes to training our dog to be the best they can be. Whether our dog is a puppy or an adult dog, the need for crate training is the same. Just as a child needs to be potty trained and taught to say please and thank you; so does a dog need to be taught to enjoy the crate. By putting in the time and energy it will take to properly crate train our dog early on in our relationship with them, we will be setting ourselves up for a lifetime of success in so many different ways.

Crate Training Benefits

Here are just some of the benefits that will come from crate training:

- We will be limiting our dog's opportunities to practice unwanted behaviors in and around the home such as: barking, digging, destroying objects, becoming reactive to the mailman and dogs that walk by, etc.
- We will be spending less energy "managing" our dog's behavior while they are roaming around freely, and thus we will have more energy to work with them when the time is appropriate.
- We can effectively train our dog to be ready to work with us or exercise when it is most convenient for us, thus decreasing the likelihood that we are stressed or short tempered when fulfilling their needs for exercise and training.
- We will be preparing our dog to eventually be able to easily and comfortably wait patiently, even without the crate and around high distractions.
- If there are other animals or people in the household, we will be ensuring that they are only interacting with our dog in ways that will support in achieving our dog training needs.
- If in the future we need to leave our dog at the vet or somewhere for boarding they will be comfortable while crated there.
- If in the future we wish to travel with our dog or transport them, they will be comfortable being in a crate to their destination, even if it is in an airplane.



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Crate Training Tips

Here are some tips to help set us and our dog up for success when it comes to crate training:

- Make sure our dog eats a lot of their regular food in the crate from the time we first have them in our care. If they do not eat, then take the food away and try again later.
- Put items like Kongs, lick mats, snuffle mats, and chews in the crate from the start to ensure that our dog finds value in being in their crate.
- Buy a "Manners Minder" so we can reward our dog for waiting patiently in the crate while we are in another room.
- Master the process of going in and out of the crate, before we close the door and leave our dog in the crate.
- Start with a short time in the crate while we are nearby before attempting to have the dog stay in the crate while we are gone. Gradually work up to our dog being alone when we are away for long periods of time.
- If our dog is able to be alone somewhere besides the crate like the car, bedroom, backyard, or x-pen; let's use that to our advantage and begin to put our dog there for more extended periods of time to prepare them for the crate as they progress.
- Initially place the crate near our bed so our dog feels close to us when they sleep in it overnight.
- Avoid the temptation to let our dog out because they are crying, whining, barking, or scratching/pushing at the door. This will reinforce these behaviors and undermine the crate training process. For our dog, the only way out of the crate should be by being patient and calm.
- If our dog is very loud in the crate, we may need to experiment with putting the crate somewhere that the barking will not bother us like the garage or a walk in closet so that we will be able to ignore such behaviors with ease.

Punishment and the Crate

Before placing our dog into the crate, we do our best to address our dog's needs for food, water, bathroom, and exercise. If we have fulfilled our dog's needs reasonably well, we can be fairly certain that if they are displaying unwanted behaviors in the crate it is not due to unfulfilled biological needs. Our dog may need to be corrected if they have been fulfilled prior to their crate time, yet continue to demonstrate unwanted behaviors inside the crate. Often times performing these behaviors is reinforcing to our dog and without appropriate punishment they will not extinguish themselves. The need for punishment will vary greatly depending on our dog's temperament, past history, and our ability to reinforce good behaviors throughout the day.



CRATE TRAINING

Punishment and the Crate continued

Here are some things to remember to help set us and our dog up for success when it comes to punishment during crate training:

- If we punish the dog for crying or barking while in the crate, we cannot let them out until they have become calm and relaxed on their own, thus demonstrating that the punishment was effective.
- If we say "no" and our dog stops the unwanted behavior, we still issue a consequence so that they will stop crying in the future, not just when we say "no."
- The crate is not a punishment, however, if our dog were to be behaving inappropriately we could place them in there to prevent them from doing unwanted behaviors that we are not able to effectively stop at the time.
- We may need to try a variety of aversive methods before we find the one that will effectively stop the unwanted behaviors. These may include:
 - Squirt the dog with a squirt bottle
 - Shake or banging loudly on the crate
 - Bonk the dog with a rolled up towel or "bonker"
 - Have a leash on the dog already and correct them with a training collar
 - Remote collar correction
 - Use a pet convincer or "Doggy Don't Device"

If we utilize these methods and do our best, we will be sure to obtain success in the smoothest fashion possible. If our dog has successfully avoided being crate trained and has learned to find massive value in the unwanted behaviors we spoke of, this process will be more challenging for us. If our dog is older or perhaps nervous, impulsive, pushy, or strong willed, this will also be more challenging. Regardless of the case, crate training can be successfully accomplished if we master the basics set forth in this handout and reach out to a qualified trainer when we are struggling and are in need of extra support or guidance. Lastly, remember that your dog is so lucky to have an owner like you who is willing to educate yourself on the needs of your animal and how to best show them the way. As always: "We don't blame them, we train them."