

## ***A bed is good, a crate is better!***

Imagine – you go out and your dog is safe, quiet and content at home. When you return, your couch is in one piece and there are no surprises on the floor. You and your dog are happier because your dog is crate trained.

Crate training is a process, one that is more involved than putting your dog in a crate and walking away. Instead, you will use positive training techniques to foster good crate manners and a dog that loves his crate. Plus, a crate trained dog is also a better vacation buddy – able to travel and stay in hotels with you.

## ***Does my dog really want to be in a crate?***

Yes – most dogs love having something that is all theirs. A permanent crate in the house gives your dog a secure place that is all his own, free from intruders. Your dog's crate is his domain, where he is allowed to make the right decisions.

In fact, many of the negative behaviors that land so many dogs in shelters – barking, destruction of property and potty accidents – can be curbed with successful crate training.

## ***Shouldn't I wait until my dog is older to crate train?***

The best time to begin crate training your dog is his first day home. Puppies ages six months and younger should have limited time in the crate. As a rule, take the number of months old your puppy is, add 1 and you will find the maximum number of hours he should be left in crate. For example, if you have a 2-month-old puppy, he should only be in the crate for 3 hours at the maximum ( $2 + 1 = 3$ ).

## ***What kind of crate should I get?***

Crates come in many different sizes and materials. Your dog's crate should be big enough for him to stand up, turn around and lay down while inside. If your dog is well behaved, does not chew excessively and is housetrained, you can safely choose from a wide variety of crates. Crates come in all different styles and colors – some even look like a piece of furniture. Once your dog is housetrained, you can utilize the largest size you would like.

- *Housetraining?* Choose a crate that is sturdy and easy-to-clean, usually made of metal or plastic.
- *Puppy?* Try a wire crate with a divider so it can grow with your pup.
- *Anxious Dog?* Choose a metal crate so you can use a MannersMinder® (a remote-controlled reward system that uses positive reinforcement training for dogs)
- *Frequent traveler?* Consider a soft, collapsible crate.

## ***What do I need for crate training?***

- Crate
- Dog treats (the smellier the better)
- Time and patience



***I think I'm ready to begin, what do I do?***

1. Set aside an hour for crate training, when you first introduce your dog to the crate. Do not feed him for at least 6 hours prior to the training.
2. With the crate open, toss in really smelly treats. Do not physically place or direct your dog into the crate. Let your dog sniff and find his way into the crate.
3. Once your dog is inside the crate, leave the door open and continue to toss in more treats. Do not wait until he finishes eating the treats to toss in more.
4. Before your dog finishes eating all of the treats, ask your dog to come out of the crate. When he comes out, ignore him.
5. Toss more smelly treats into the crate and repeat steps 1-3 at least three more times.
6. Once your dog will go into the crate on his own, ask him to come out and then shut the crate door. Put more smelly treats into the crate, but do not let the dog in. Let your dog search the crate looking for a way inside. Let him search for about 30-60 seconds then open the crate door and repeat steps 2 and 3 three times.
7. On the fourth time, lock the crate door. Do not put any treats inside the crate. Open the door and when your dog enters, put a treat in the crate. Repeat this step at least three times.
8. When your dog enters the crate on his own, close the door. Now only treat when the door is closed. When your dog is comfortable being inside the shut crate, take a few steps away. Return, put treats inside the crate, and begin walking away again.
9. Repeat step 8, slowly working your way out of the room.

***Do you have any other tips for crate training?***

- Do not treat your dog in the crate if he is vocal (barking, whining, etc).
- For the first week of crate training, close the door and lock the crate when you are not playing the crate training game. Denying your dog access usually makes the crate even more desirable.
- If your dog is reactive in the crate or when you leave the house, you may need to add all of the steps that actually go into leaving the house (e.g. pick up your keys, put on your coat, slip on your shoes and grab your wallet or purse).
- If you are unable to walk away from the crate without your dog becoming agitated, you may want to consider purchasing a MannersMinder®.



Have more questions? Call the FREE spcaLA Behavior Helpline at **(888) 772-2521, x260** or email us at [training@spcaLA.com](mailto:training@spcaLA.com).