

Training Tips, Crate Training, House Breaking, Separation Anxiety

Why should I crate train my puppy?

For the safety of your puppy first of all. It's great for housebreaking! A crate trained dog often learns quicker and is more reliable in the house. Crate training should be the first and most important tool you use in properly training your dog. Crate training should be the foundation of your training in obedience, potty training, or otherwise. A crate helps build confidence in your dog. When your dog is in its crate it is not getting in trouble and you are in control. Crating gives your dog a sense of security when you're gone and can lessen separation anxiety. A crate is a good place to put your puppy or dog when they get on YOUR nerves! After one too many chewed up things it's nice to put them somewhere they can't get into any MORE trouble! It's a place a dog with children can get a break from their constant pestering. (Assuming the parent has taught the children good dog skills - to leave the dog alone when it's in the crate). It's somewhere safe to put the dog when visitors come over that are afraid of dogs - or if the dog doesn't like the company! Or maybe you're having a dinner party? If you have multiple dogs, each can have their "own" space to collect special toys and it has "their" personal smell. Don't all kids want their own bedroom? So do the dogs! A crate is a safe way for your dog to travel - it's like a doggie seatbelt. Many dogs' lives have been saved by the crate in an accident. Also keeps your car windows clean! A crate is convenient when you travel - often hotels will allow crated dogs in rooms when they would never allow loose dogs if your dog gets hurt you have a safe and comfortable place for him to stay and not re-injure himself, or be pestered by other animals or children.

I feel it is mean to cage a dog. Crate training is the best gift you can give your new pet. There is a misconception that "cages" (also called "crates" or "kennels") are "cruel". However, it is only humans that associate them with cruelty - a dog doesn't think that way. As humans we are primates - a different species. We associate cages with confinement and zoos, or even jail. Think of them as a playpen like you would use for an infant. However, to your dog it's his "safe haven", "cave", "den" or "bedroom". He feels safe and secure there and a natural place to be. It's a place he can go to relax and know that he will not be bothered. He can feel secure since it's a place he can easily defend (primitive canine thinking, yes, but your dog is a primitive dog!). The crate also spares him punishment for getting into trouble when you aren't home and he's too young to know the difference between right and wrong. Dogs instinctively do not urinate or defecate in their dens - so it is the perfect place for him to rest and wait for your return as he will heroically try to keep from having accidents where he "hangs out" and sleeps. Mom taught him that by keeping her whelping box very clean!

What size of crate should I get for my puppy? Unless you want to buy several crates, we recommend buying a crate big enough for your puppy to fit in as a full grown adult. He needs it only big enough for him to stand up, turn around, and lay down. He is not going to need all that

space when he is little so we recommend using a divider and expanding the cage area as he grows. If you give him too big of an area, he will potty in one side and sleep in the other. Remember puppies grow fast! You may find yourself expanding or buying another crate every 2-3 weeks.

What kind of crate should I get for my puppy? It is up to you, we like to use the collapsible metal wire crates. They are easy to clean, transport, and most of them come with a divider. They can't crack like some of the plastic "airline" crates. They have a tray that is easy to remove for cleaning. You can get them with multiple doors so if you have an awkward area you can turn them sideways to fit better and still have a door access.

How much will a crate cost? It depends on what type of crate you chose and what size of dog you have. Crates seem to be more affordable these days. For a medium to large dog crate averages about \$50-\$75. That is a small price to pay compared to the cost of the damage he could do by chewing up things while left unattended.

Where should I put the crate? Some people like to put the crate in their bedroom. We don't. I am a light sleeper and every time the dog rolls over, moves, or dreams, it wakes me. We prefer to keep our crates close to the potty exit. Preferably in a light traffic area. You don't want to put the crate in the most active room of the house. Your puppy likes it fairly peaceful while he is trying to sleep. That doesn't mean you have to keep the house quiet while he is resting, but not in the middle of all the action either. Keep in mind you need to have his crate where you can hear if he wakes in the middle of the night and needs to go out.

When do puppies normally have to potty? Puppies normally have to eliminate when they wake up from a nap, rigorous play, and right after eating. (2-15 minutes) I have had some puppies that needed a potty break half way into feeding time.

How long can he hold it in his crate? Take the puppy's age in months and add 1, that is the amount of hours they can normally hold it. Example if your puppy is 2 months old + 1 He should be able to hold it for almost 3 hours. This is just to give you an idea. Puppies up to the approximate age of 6 months should not be left in the crate longer than 3-4 hours. You will get to know your puppy's ability to hold it.

How much should I feed my puppy? We feed our puppies as much as they like for the 1st & 2nd meal, and a smaller portion for the 3rd. When they are older we do the same but without the 2nd meal. The amount of food depends on your breed of dog, its age and what food you are feeding. We like to feed young puppies as much as they like as they are growing. We recommend talking to your puppy's breeder and your vet for proper feeding.

How often should I feed my puppy? We recommend feeding puppies up to 6 months old 3 small meals a day. Once they have reached 6 months we work their feeding times to 2 meals a day.

Some people feed their adult dogs 1 meal a day. We do not recommend 1 meal. We have had better success with feeding 2 meals.

Where should I feed my puppy? Feed your puppy in his crate. Feeding your puppy in his crate will help with your crate training. Do not leave food in your puppy's crate all day. Offer puppy his food at meal time. If he stops eating take it out of his crate. If he doesn't eat any or just a little offer it back to him in about 10-15 minutes later. If he still doesn't eat or stops eating take it back out and wait to next meal time to feed him again. This rule should apply to all feeding times. You should be checking on your puppy at meal time. Not only to see if he is eating, but to be ready to take him out to potty. Plus it is good to be close in the event he should choke on his food.

What kind of food should I feed my puppy? We feed our puppies/dogs a higher protein food. We have an active breed. We stay away from a lot of the commercial brand foods and foods with colors and dyes. We do not feed canned or moist food. Hard kibble helps keep their teeth strong. We do not feed foods with high filler content. Foods that contain a lot of grain/corn just pass through their systems and usually the dogs have a "softer stool". Not fun cleaning up that caramel color soft serve ice cream looking piles. The more fillers the more piles.

CRATE TRAINING

The golden rule to crate training is having patience and **NEVER take your puppy out of his crate if he is crying**, howling, or barking. And NEVER use the crate for punishment! Start by introducing your puppy to his crate when you bring him home. Show him the crate with an open door. Let him investigate on his own. Place a toy inside, if he goes in the crate praise him. Pick a command word for his crate like kennel, crate, or bed. We use kennel. Tell him "good kennel" when he goes in. Do not lock him in his crate when you introduce him to it. If he goes in and lies down praise him and slowly close the door but don't lock it. Only shut the door for less than a minute. If he comes out, now is a good time to take him outside and introduce him to his potty area.

It is not uncommon for puppies to whine or whimper at first when you start placing them in their crate. Do not respond to his whining. Responding to his whining or telling him it is all right will only make life difficult for you and him. By responding to him you will be setting him up for separation anxiety. The best thing for you to do is ignore him, turn your back or leave the room. Give him 10 minutes or so to settle down. Return to him, if he is quiet tell him "good quiet" and take him outside. If he is protesting smack the top of his crate to make a loud noise and tell him "NO quiet" If you get even 20 seconds of silence, take him out and tell him "good quiet" and take him outside.

Start by leaving him in his crate in short sessions. 10-15 minutes at first and slowly extend the time. Never take him out of his crate when he is protesting! The first time you let him out when he is protesting, he won, therefore you lost. Always get him to be silent before taking him out.

Even if you have to distract him. It may not seem that important for you to win at this point, trust me you lost a bigger battle than you realize. Dogs are creatures of habit. If you let him out when he is protesting then he will think that is how I get to get out of here. Next thing you know he has you trained to let him out every time he barks or cries.

The hardest part of crate training is having patience with a protesting puppy. If you give in and take him out while protesting it will only make training harder and take longer to break him from protesting. Be patient and consistent!

You will get to know the difference between protesting and a mercy cry that he has to potty. If he potty's in his crate he was most likely left in his crate too long. If that is the case, don't scold him, you can show him you are disappointed by your body language. Just take him outside and clean it up.

If your puppy wakes up in the middle of the night take him outside! If you ignore him after he wakes up be prepared to clean the crate when you decide to get up. You are the only one to blame for that "accident".

Taking your puppy out to potty should be the last thing you do before you go to bed. Even if it means waking him up to take him out. It's easier for you to take him out then rather than you getting woke up to take him out 2 or 3 hours later.

If you get upset with your puppy do not put him in his crate as a punishment. You can put him in his crate if you are upset with him but do it on a positive note. Teaching your puppy to sit is fairly easy, have your puppy sit, praise him, then put him in the crate. Then he will not associate the crate as a punishment.

You want his crate to be his "happy" place. His crate should not be a bad place. You want to make his crate a place to feel comfortable.

HOUSE BREAKING

The best way to housebreak your new puppy is by crate training! The most important key to successfully housebreak your new puppy is patience, consistency, and praise! The only time your puppy should be free in the house is supervised after he has pottied outside. Free time in the house is a privilege and should be earned. If your puppy potties in the house it is your fault, you were not watching him. Clean it up and be upset with yourself!

Step 1

Start with taking puppy outside to "potty" area and tell your puppy "potty" or desired command. This is not a time to play! Your puppy needs to learn that he is outside for a reason. Play time outside is designated at a different time.

Step 2

Stay with your puppy, after 5-10 minutes or so if he doesn't potty, take him back inside and put him in his crate. Wait about 15-30 min, then repeat Step 1. If he still does not potty repeat Step 2. If he does potty outside Praise him while he is going "good potty". Now he has earned his supervised free time in the house.

Step 3

Earned free time in the house should be designated to one room at a time. Preferably rooms close to the potty exit. Just like the free time should be earned, so should access to the rest of the house. You have better control over situations if your puppy doesn't have the option to get away from you during training. Watch for signs that he may be getting ready to "go". Sniffing around in a small area and circling is a good sign. If you think he is getting ready, take him outside. Repeat Step 1 & 2

Step 4

If your puppy does go potty outside and you have praised him, but you are ready for him to go back in his crate, take him back inside let him play for a couple of minutes then put him in is crate and tell him "kennel" or crate or bed, your command of choice.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Separation anxiety can be defined as increased fearfulness or stress of the dog after the departure of the owner.

For example, after their owners leave the house, anxious dogs might bark or howl, have bowel or bladder "accidents," or destroy things.

Dogs that form intense attachments with their owners are more likely candidates for separation anxiety.

You can start preventing separation anxiety even before you get your puppy. First of all, CRATE TRAIN.

Anti-separation anxiety training should begin when you first bring your puppy home.

When you leave them, don't make a big deal about leaving. Don't say anything. Don't prolong your departure by talking to them and arousing their anxiety. They need to learn that it is ok for you to leave.

When leaving don't give your dog tons of love and affection just before you leave. They don't understand that. You get them all worked up then you disappear. Now what? You want to leave your dog when he is calm and relaxed. The same thing applies when you come home. Don't make this grand entrance. "Oh I missed you, did you miss me?" all the dog hears is bla bla bla and senses the distress in your voice. Most dogs that jump on you when you come home do that out of anxiety.

Dogs do have feelings, but not in the same sense as we do. Their feelings mean something else to them.

For example: If you get into a loud argument with someone and your feeling angry, the dog may be feeling fear. When we may think the dog is happy, he may be feeling anxious.

When leaving your dog start by leaving them for short periods initially. When you come back, again, don't make it a big deal. Go on with your routine for a few minutes before giving the puppy a little attention.

Separation anxiety is a form of mental illness affecting dogs. The second their owners leave, they become extremely upset and anxious. Then they become frantic. At this point the dog is not in control of its behavior.

Separation anxiety is a panic disorder likely caused by over stimulation of the parts of the brain that regulate fear and stress, but the term is often misapplied. Like Attention Deficit Disorder in children, separation anxiety has become a trendy diagnosis. Not every dog that misbehaves when the owners are away has separation anxiety.

Dogs are pack animals and are happiest around their "pack." They are extremely social critters that form strong bonds with their owners. Most dogs do not like it when people leave and will exhibit mild forms of the behaviors associated with separation anxiety. A typical dog left alone may chew shoes out of boredom, but dogs with separation anxiety will chew the furniture, walls, or anything in site.

The three main signs of separation anxiety are destruction, vocalization, and elimination. These dogs will bark and howl the entire time the owner is gone. The destruction these dogs do is astounding. Some severely anxious dogs have been known to jump through windows to try to get to their owners.

There are several hallmarks of separation anxiety. The first is the mass destruction that heightens when the dog is left alone.

The dogs literally destroy the house, chewing through walls, doors, and even into the refrigerator!

Exit points to the house are targets, perhaps because dogs think they can get outside to find their owners. Another distinction is that this extreme destruction occurs within the first 15 minutes after the owner leaves,

Unfortunately separation anxiety is self-perpetuating. These dogs keep getting more and more upset each time the owners leave. Having another pet does not help these dogs, as it is not boredom that is causing the behavior. These dogs are extremely attached to their owners and are very people-oriented. They are often wonderful pets otherwise

There is no quick fix for this problem. Anti-depressant and anxiety drugs are not enough to conquer separation anxiety. Desensitization therapy involves having the dog sit and stay as the owner gradually steps away. Eventually the owner will step out of the room as the dog stays and learns that the owner will return. The goal is to take the "scary" factor out of the owner's departure. This is time-consuming work and takes dedication. Many veterinarians may refer owners to a behaviorist.

Crate training these dogs is helpful. It at least provides these dogs a safer place where they can't destroy things or harm themselves. Crate training is highly recommended for dogs that are eating socks out of boredom as well!

We recommend crate training your dog regardless if you think your dog suffers from separation anxiety.

Proper training starting at an early age can prevent them from becoming a difficult dog to live with.

Separation anxieties in most dogs were created by their owners.

"Babying" your dog in stressful or scary situations is one of the main causes. No socialization or improper socialization is another.