

INTRODUCING A DOG TO CRATING

Benefits of Crate Training:

- Crate training can help with house training or chewing/destructive behavior.
- It can make traveling with your dog easier.
- It can provide a safe space for your dog in an emergency.
- It can help you restrict your dog's movement if they are injured or have had surgery.

To introduce a dog to a crate, you can place the crate in a common area of your home, put a soft blanket inside, and use positive reinforcement to encourage your dog to enter.

Steps:

1. **Place the crate:** Put the crate in a busy area of your home, especially in a room where the family spends most their time. When your dog is more comfortable with going in the crate, eventually it can be moved to different areas of the home.
2. **Make it inviting:** Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate.
3. **Use treats:** Drop treats near the crate, then inside the door, and finally all the way inside. If your dog enjoys his/her kibble, use a measured amount from their daily meal(s). Use a higher value food/treat if they are showing no interest in going in. You want your pup to be excited to go in and get that tasty treat.
4. **Reward curiosity:** Give your dog a treat or a kind word when they inspect or enter the crate. Giving them a happy and exciting praise, is also very rewarding.
5. **Using a verbal cue:** Once your dog is comfortable going in the crate, even after throwing a treat inside, add a cue. For e.g. "crate", "kennel", "kennel up"
6. **Be patient:** Don't force your dog to enter the crate.
7. **Keep the door open:** Let your dog go in and out of the crate as they please.
8. **Use toys:** Throw a toy or ball in the crate and allowing them to go in and come back out with the toy. Or have a game fetch! Allowing your dog to initiate all the behavior of going in and out of the crate as he pleases. When using positive reinforcement, this creates a feel-good feeling for your dog and they are learning that "good things happen" when I enter my crate.
9. **Closing the Door:** Once your dog initiates going in and is very comfortable in the crate, offer some toy's, "Kong" or even spread some peanut butter on the back of the crate. This will help build duration with your dog staying in his crate. If he is engaging in the item, close the door but do not latch it. This allows your dog to engage in the enrichment with the context of the door being shut.

See attached video on introducing your dog to a crate: <https://youtu.be/FOAxfyKYYnI>