



CRATE TRAINING ADULT DOGS AND PUPPIES: Crate Training 101

This method of Crate Training is for dogs who were not previously crate trained or who are suspicious or frightened of the crate.

Step 1: Set up the crate and make it a cozy place for the dog to hang out in. Start by tossing treats in the crate and have the dog walk in and out of the crate—**DO NOT CLOSE THE CRATE DOOR!!!**

Step 2: Hook your dog on Kong toys:

In order to hook the dog on the Kong toys, stuff them with something that the dog can't resist, and make it easy for the dog to get the food out of the Kong. Low fat Liverwurst, canned dog food, cream cheese, peanut butter, and cheese whiz etc are good things to try. As the dog gets hooked on getting the food out of the Kong, you can get more creative and start stuffing them with things that are harder to get out such as biscuits or bully sticks. You can also freeze the Kongs before you give them to the dogs. This makes the dog work harder at getting the food out, and gives you more time to do training. Do this phase separately from the crate training; you want them to get hooked on the Kong without them being associated with the crate.

Step 3: When crate training we recommend the large size Dental Kongs.

These can be tied inside the crate to entice and encourage your dog to work on them while he is in the crate. A rawhide bone with a knot on the end would also work well for this. Tie the Kong (or bone) along the floor of the crate by making a simple loop over one end with a piece of rope (a kennel lead works well for this). Make it as long or short as needed to make your dog comfortable lying in front of or in the crate—which ever your dog needs. Shorten the rope gradually so that the dog is forced to be in the crate in order to lick the Kong. The goal is to mold your dog into lying down and licking the Kong when he or she is put in the crate. Once again, **DON'T CLOSE THE CRATE DOOR YET!!!**

Step 4: Once the dog is comfortable settling down and licking the Kong until it is empty, then you can start swinging the door closed and immediately opening it back up again. Do this over time so that the dog doesn't even notice that the door is closed. You will eventually start leaving the door closed for longer periods, but always open the door back up before the dog has finished the Kong. You can remove the rope at this point.

Step 5: At this point the only time the dog gets a Kong should be when he is put in the crate. You can practice going in the crate several times a day by tossing in a stuffed Kong and closing the crate door. Opening the door can be delayed slightly longer and longer after the Kong is finished--at first for only a matter of seconds; later opened up only for a sleeping dog. **NEVER OPEN UP THE DOOR IF THE DOG IS FUSSING.** Panic is different, but if this program is followed, the dog should not be put in a situation where he would panic. If you see the dog start to fuss, you can very matter of fact remind him that he needs to lie down and be quiet. During this time, you can feed your dog in the crate; crate him during your own mealtimes and when either of you needs quiet time.

For a dog with separation anxiety, you may begin to wander around in the house and very briefly, go in and out of sight. Gradually, you can go farther and begin to go in and out of doors. Be sure to go only as fast (or slow) as the dog can handle without outwardly stressing. At this point, you can walk up to a dog that is behaving well in its crate and drop in some treats, rewarding him for good behavior. Pretty soon he will learn that quiet behavior brings good things, and fussing gets him nowhere!!!

The last step in the crate training process is to leave the house while your dog is happily licking his Kong, and listen or use a video camera to make sure he remains calm and quiet in the crate. If he doesn't, then it's time to back up a little, and go back to reinforcing good behavior by rewarding him for remaining quiet in his crate while you are at home.

Contact Our Companions for further information or with questions on crate training your dog at: 860-242-9999.