

# Crate Training 101

“Cosy and private 1 bedroom with a view” can be ideal for travel or those just wanting a quiet and secure location to relax and unwind away from the hustle and bustle of a busy lifestyle and escape the crowds. That is how your dog should be able to describe the sanctity of his crate. To be viewed as a place of comfort and solitude whilst providing owners with peace of mind that their beloved pooch is safe (and so is their house!)

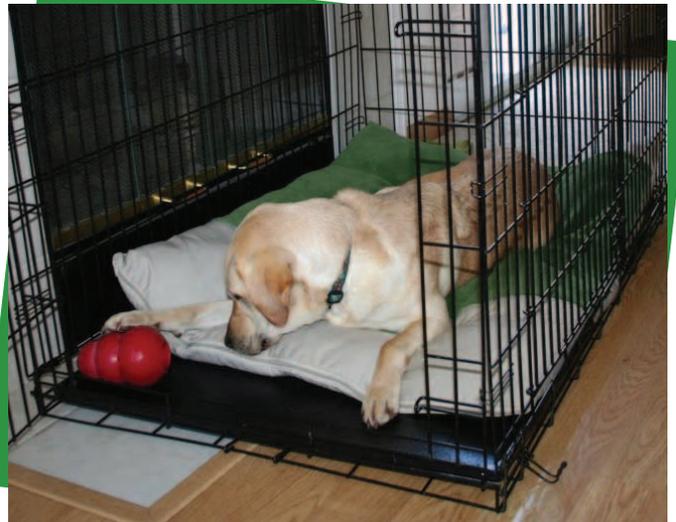
## CRATING PHILOSOPHY

Crate training is an effective training tool for puppies and adult dogs. It assists in managing toilet training regimes and keeps puppies and young dogs alike, safe from harm and out of mischief when they are unable to be supervised. Pet experts agree that dog crates are safe, effective and even reminiscent of dogs’ ancestral dens.

Dogs do need to be trained to use their crates and how you approach crate training will have a strong impact on your success.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A CRATE

- **Type of crate** – There are numerous types of crates available. Plastic (airline approved) crates, Wire collapsible metal crates and fabric crates with zip up mesh doors, these should only be used if you are certain your dog is happy and calm inside and not inclined to scratch through the mesh.
- **Size** – A crate should be big enough for a dog to stand up, turn around easily and lie down.
- **Bedding** – Bedding should be comfortable and cosy making it an appealing place to curl up for a nap, however revise this for a minimalistic approach if the dog is a bed chewer providing that enrichment options have been exhausted first.
- **Water** – When enclosed in the crate the dog should always have access to water, there are bowls designed for hanging in the wire and plastic crates or alternatively no spill style bowls.
- **Toys and Treats** – Providing toys and treats will increase the likelihood that the dog will view the crate as an enjoyable place to hang out, if good things always happen in there why wouldn’t you want to go back? Rubber chew toys filled with food will help the dog pass the time in an enjoyable way, even his favourite snuggle toys will make his crate a cosier haven.
- **Location** – Where possible set the crate up in a central part of the home (living room, TV room etc.) This will encourage investigation and use of the crate without the dog feeling isolated away from the family, particularly important in the initial training period where you are building positive associations.



## CRATE TRAINING PROCESS

A good rule of thumb when beginning crate training is to create a positive association with the crate. This is where a treat-stuffed rubber chew toy will come in handy.



### Step 1: Introduction to the crate

Place the crate in a central location with a comfy bed inside, where possible remove the door to avoid it swinging or knocking the dog and causing a fright. Allow the dog to explore at leisure, move over to the crate and start speaking to the dog in a happy tone of voice. Encourage entry by tossing a handful of treats inside. Don't crowd the dog let him enter and explore under his own volition. In passing continue to toss treats into the crate at every opportunity until he is almost beating you to get in there, each time he enters the crate start creating a verbal association by repeating the word 'Crate' or 'Bed'.

### Step 2: Feed meals and stuffed treat chews inside the crate

If the dog is readily hopping into the crate on your approach to it, place his food bowl in front of him, if he is still hesitant place the bowl up the back of the crate to encourage entry. Once the dog is comfortable eating in the crate close the door while he eats, the first few times open the door as soon as the bowl is empty, with each successive meal leave the door closed a few minutes longer. Before opening the door each time ask the dog to sit and feed a treat through the top of the crate. Then open the door and invite the dog out which should help minimise a frantic exit, here you can use the same verbal cue you might use to release the dog from a stay 'Free' or 'Break'.



### Step 3: Lengthen the Crating period

Once the dog is happily eating meals and treats inside the crate without any fear or anxiety, he can be confined for short periods of time whilst you are home. Continue to send the dog into the crate on a verbal cue and reward with a food filled treat dispenser. Go about your usual routine and release the dog from the crate after a period of time, build and extend on this where possible. After your dog can spend approx. 30 minutes in the crate with you at home but mostly out of sight you can attempt short trips out of the home. Make your departures and arrivals low key no emotional long goodbyes and hellos rather be matter of fact in your approach, this will help reduce any anxiety created by your departure and your return.

- Freezing the stuffed rubber chew toy will extend the treat time and keep your dog occupied as they spend time in their crate.

Crate training can be further utilised as a training aid in the home to teach exercises such as Stay and recall etc. for more information check out Canadian dog trainer, Susan Garrett of Say Yes Dog Training's DVD titled 'Crate Games'

Article by Rachael James on behalf of KONG Company Pty Ltd



### SOME CRATING DO'S AND DON'TS

- Do** use positive training to create a positive association.
- Do** provide comfortable bedding.
- Do** initially keep crate training sessions short.
- Do** provide plenty of exercise and interaction when the dog is not crated.
  
- Don't** force the dog to enter the crate.
- Don't** use the crate as a punishment.
- Don't** leave your dog in the crate too long.
- Don't** allow children to play in the crate or with the dog while he is cornered in the crate, this is his sanctuary he may have placed himself in the crate to avoid confrontation.

If you would like to use this information in your puppy packs or on your website, please contact Provet Marketing at [marketing@provet.com.au](mailto:marketing@provet.com.au)

