

The Conundrum of Crate Training:

“TO CRATE OR NOT TO CRATE, THAT IS THE QUESTION”

Dog owners love to imagine what their dogs do when they are left alone to their own devices during the day. “*Jake likes to surf the net, while Milo likes to watch court TV.*” “*Daisy is an amazing pianist, but only will play when no one is watching.*” You get the idea. I myself am personally guilty of this, convinced that Janie is buying and selling stocks while we are away.

While it is really amusing to imagine that our animals lead secret lives, we have to logically think about the safety and well being of our beloved pet. Enter: **THE CRATE.**

The crate is a *WONDERFUL* training tool. Do not fear the crate. Learn to love the crate. Although it may look like a ‘cage’ or a ‘punishment’, the crate can be a very positive place for your canine companion. Dogs are naturally den animals, seeking comfort and shelter from the outside world. We can use this natural instinct to our advantage when it comes to training.

We can use the crate in many different ways for our beloved dogs. We can use the crate to help with housebreaking our new puppy, dogs with separation anxiety, counter-surfing dogs that get into everything, and accident-prone dogs.

Housebreaking with the Crate:

This might sound like a tedious project, but trust me-it makes housetraining go twice as fast!

Here is the basic idea:

- Puppy goes in crate. Take puppy to go potty outside every few hours, when puppy goes potty, reward with food treat and give 15-30 minutes of free *supervised* (and I mean tether that dog to your waist!!) playtime around the house. Return puppy to crate. Repeat all day.
- Feed puppy in crate only. Make sure crate is just big enough to stand up, turn around, and lay down. If the crate is too big, puppy will just potty in the corner and not care about it. Dogs naturally do not want to lay down in their own excrement.
- Puppy sleeps in crate.

I know this sounds like the puppy is spending lots of time in the crate, but this is needed for proper training and to lower chances of accidents. The puppy will have plenty of exercise time during periods of ‘free time’ after they have successfully pottied outside. The dog can be weaned off of the Crate as it gets better about going potty where it is suppose to go.

I always say that putting the dog in the crate when it is left alone in the house is a good idea. Not only for the welfare of your furniture, but for the safety of the dog. Trust must be formed before the dog can safely be left outside when owners are away.

Hopefully this article has enlightened you to the beneficial uses of a dog crate. Once again, it is NOT a harsh tool for punishment. It is a POSITIVE place for the dog to sleep, eat, and have privacy in their very own 'den'.

Where to find dog crates:

Pet Smart

Pet Co

Soldan's Pet Supplies

Pet Supplies 'Plus'

Amazon.com