

Potential Problems

Too much time in the crate

A crate isn't a magical solution. If not used correctly, a dog can feel trapped and frustrated. For example, if your dog is crated all day while you're at work and then crated again all night, he's spending too much time in too small a space. Other arrangements should be made to accommodate his physical and emotional needs. Also, remember that puppies under 6 months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time. They can't control their bladders and bowels for longer periods.

Separation Anxiety

Attempting to use the crate as a remedy for separation anxiety will not solve the problem. A crate may prevent your dog from being destructive, but he may injure himself in an attempt to escape from the crate. Separation anxiety problems can only be resolved with counter-conditioning and desensitization procedures.

Whining

If your dog whines or cries while in the cage at night, it may be difficult to decide whether he's whining to be let out of the crate, or if he needs to be let outside to eliminate. If your dog hasn't been rewarded for whining in the past by being released from his crate, try to ignore the whining. If your dog is just testing you, he'll probably stop whining soon. Yelling at him or pounding on the crate will only make things worse. If you're convinced that your dog doesn't need to eliminate, the best response is to ignore him until he stops whining. Do not give in, otherwise you'll teach him to whine loud and long to get what he wants.

Why Support the Animal Welfare Association?

We serve our community through:

- Public pet clinic services — Low-cost spay/neuter and pet wellness. Over 13,000 in 2011.
- Saving thousands of homeless animals each year and adopting out 2,016 animals in 2011.
- Humane education activities for schools and youth groups.
- A Pet Assisted Therapy program that brings the comfort of animals to nursing home residents.
- An outreach for veterinary services, pet food, supplies and pet care for our county's towns.
- A No-Kill Shelter

**Become a
Sponsor Today**

509 Centennial Boulevard
Voorhees, NJ 08043

Phone: 856-424-2288
Fax: 856-424-8318

www.awanj.org

*Caring for animals...
benefiting people.*



Crate Training Your Dog



*Helpful Resources
to Crate Train Your
New Best Friend*



Animal Welfare Association

General Information

Crate training your dog may take some time and effort, but can be useful in a variety of situations. If you have a new dog or puppy, you can use the crate to limit his access to the house until he learns all the house rules, such as what he can and cannot chew. A crate is also a safe way of transporting your dog in the car, as well as a way of taking him places where he may not be welcome to run freely. If you properly train your dog to use the crate, he will think of it as his safe place and will be happy to spend time there when needed. Always provide water for your dog anytime he is in the crate. Spill proof bowls that attach to the kennel gate work best.

Selecting a Crate

Crates may be plastic or collapsible, metal pens. Collapsible fabric kennels are designed for use when the owner is present and may not contain a dog for long periods while unsupervised. Crates come in different sizes and can be purchased at most pet supply stores. Your dog's crate should be large enough for him to stand up and turn around in.

The Crate Training Process

Crate training can take days or weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament and past experiences. It's important to keep two things in mind while crate training: the crate should always be associated with something pleasant, and training should take place in a series of small steps - do not go too fast.

Step 1: Introducing your dog to the crate

- Put the crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time.
- Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate.
- To encourage your dog to enter the crate, use treats or toys. If he refuses at first, that's ok, do not force him to enter.

Step 2: Feeding your dog meals in the crate

- After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding him his meals near it. Once he is used to the crate, start feeding him in there. This will create a pleasant association with the crate.
- Once your dog is comfortably in the crate eating his meal, you can close the door.
- With each successive feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until he's staying in the crate for 10 minutes or so after eating.
- If he whines or cries in the crate, it is imperative that you not let him out until he stops. Otherwise, he'll learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine and he'll keep doing it.

Step 3: Conditioning your dog to the crate for longer time periods

- After your dog is eating his regular meals in the crate with no sign of fear or anxiety, you can confine him there for short time periods while you are home.
- When he enters the crate, praise him, give him a treat and close the door. Leave the room for a few minutes. Return, and let him out of the crate.
- Repeat this process a few times a day. With each repetition, increase the time you are out of sight. Once he will stay quietly for about 30 minutes, begin leaving him crated when you're gone for short time periods and/or at night.

Crating your dog when left alone

- When leaving home, don't make your departure emotional and long. Praise your dog briefly, give him a treat for entering the crate and leave quietly.
- When you return home, do not reward him for excited behavior by responding to him in an excited, enthusiastic way. Keep arrivals low key.
- Continue to crate your dog for short periods from time to time when you're home so he doesn't associate crating with being left alone.

Crating your dog at night

- Initially, it may be a good idea to put the crate in your bedroom or nearby, especially if he is a puppy. Puppies often need to go outside to eliminate during the night, and you will want to hear him when he whines.
- Older dogs can initially be nearby so that crating doesn't become associated with social isolation.
- Once your dog is sleeping comfortably through the night, you can begin to gradually move the crate to the location of your prefer.

