

# CRATE TRAINING



## Benefits of Kennel Training:

A kennel is an indispensable management tool. The most familiar use of the kennel is as an aid in housetraining puppies. But, a kennel shouldn't be thought of only in connection with puppies. The benefits are limitless and continue through every day of a dog's life. In fact, it is recommended that you provide your dog with a kennel throughout his lifetime. Kennel training works in part because most dogs seek out and feel secure resting in a den-like area. That's why you'll often see dogs sleeping off in a quiet area or in a chair he "just fits." A kennel offers security and place for you dog to call his own, where he can go for a little privacy.

## Kennel Training Aids In:

- 1) Housetraining
- 2) The prevention of destructive chewing and costly damage to your home
- 3) Safeguarding a puppy or new dog from potentially dangerous household items such as poisonous cleaning chemicals and electrical wires
- 4) The prevention of separation stress. A kennel provides your dog with a secure retreat and teaches him to learn to tolerate and even enjoy quiet time by himself.
- 5) Creating a dog that can stay with a veterinarian or groomer without undue stress (they will both thank you for this!)
- 6) Offering a safe way to transport your dog in the car or on a plane. Additionally, most hotels that accept dog on their premises require they be kenneled while in the room to prevent damage to hotel furniture and rugs. Offering a safe place to keep your dog if workmen are in the house (going in and out and potentially leaving a door or fence open for your dog to wander off)
- 7) Offering a safe place to keep your dog if you have visitors who are afraid of him or vice versa
- 8) A place your dog can go to get away from children who want to love just a little much, or the grabbing fingers, and choke holds of toddlers.
- 9) Offering a safe place to keep your dog if he is recuperating from an injury or illness.

## The Cost Of Using A Kennel VS. The Cost Of Not Using A Kennel:

Kennels cost between \$9.99 and \$179.99 depending on the size, type and source of purchase. Not using a kennel may mean your dog destroys you shoes, table legs, chairs and sofas, flooring, telephone and computer wires. Obviously, this can become quite costly. However, the real cost of not using a kennel is risking your dog's safety. If you let your puppy fun free throughout your house, there is an endless list of trouble he can get into including: eating houseplants, chewing electric cords, scavenging in the garbage and chewing your shoes and clothing. All of which can cause death.

## Features Of A Quality Kennel:

Decide if you want a wire or plastic kennel:

Make sure your kennel is well made, sturdy, and lacks sharp edges that could hurt your dog.

### Kennel Size:

I use a size 400 or size 500 Vari Kennel for an adult Doberman Pinscher, but there are cheaper brands available. You want a kennel that is slightly over the height and length of your adult dog. A size 400 Vari Kennel is 24 ½" L x 36"W x 26"H and a size 500 Vari Kennel is 27"W x 40"L x 30"H.

Use this as a guide to buy a kennel. Manufactures vary on the sizes considerably.

### Bedding:

Most puppies are likely to chew bedding left in their kennel. They are also likely to eliminate on the bedding and push it to the side. Therefore, it is usually better to hold off on putting a mat, towel or dog bed in the kennel until you have had the opportunity to teach your dog to focus his chewing on appropriate chew toys and have a good start on teaching your pup to control elimination. In the case of a hairless use a sweater to give them the warmth that bedding would normally provide. Until this point, you can provide your pup with a soft bed while he lies next to you and naps. This way you can supervise him and redirect his attention if he tries to chew the bed.

### Toys:

Be sure your dog's kennel is always well stocked with at least two good chew toys. Some of the best ones are hollow, white sterilized bones and stuffed chew toy, you can use CheeseWiz or peanut butter to put in the hollow it will keep him occupied for hours. Plush, furry toys and squeaky toys should not be left alone with your dog, or rawhides, pig ears etc. Parts can come off and they can choke, or pieces can become lodged in the intestine.

### Location Of The Crate:

Because dogs are social animals, it is advisable that to begin you keep the kennel near you when your dog is confined. This will help to prevent an association being made between the kennel and being left alone. As your dog become accustomed to his kennel, move it from room to room so he is comfortable staying in it regardless of where it is placed. This will pay off down the road if you want your dog to rest quietly in his kennel when you are staying at a hotel or visiting friends.

### Introducing Your Dog To The Kennel:

In order that your dog associate his kennel with comfort and security, it is important that his initial experiences be pleasant. Rather than simply putting your dog in his kennel and expecting him to "get used to it," spend some time helping him to gradually become accustomed to it and you will be rewarded with a dog whom not only tolerates but also enjoys time in his kennel.

Begin by allowing your dog to explore the kennel, on his own. Leave the kennel with the door open (or off) in his long-term confinement area (utility room, part of the kitchen, foyer, or bathroom) (someplace you can use a baby gate, or ex-pen to confine the puppy that is puppy proof and safe). Place his toys and meal in the kennel and toss in a few tasty treats whenever you pass by and he is certain to be going in and out of it within hours if not minutes! If your dog seems very hesitant to enter the kennel, even when treats are in it, place his food bowl just in front of the kennel, then right inside the doorway and then, finally, in the back. Do this in stages.

When your puppy will enter and exit willingly on his own you are ready to begin teaching him to be comfortable being confined to the kennel.

You will be most successful if you make your first attempts at kennel training during periods when you dog is most tired. The first confinement session should be after a period of play, exercise, and elimination (when the puppy is ready to take a nap).

Sit by the kennel and toss a treat in so your dog enters it. Close the door for just a few seconds. Don't try to push this first confinement period to see how long he will tolerate it. Let him out and ignore him. Release from confinement should be as calm as possible. If you praise your dog profusely when he comes out of the kennel it is likely he will view coming out of the kennel as more rewarding than staying in it. Repeat the exercise and gradually increase the time the door is shut.

You may choose to put a command word or phrase on going into the kennel. Teach your dog to go in his kennel when you say the chosen term, such as, "Kennel up," by saying it as you toss a treat into the kennel. Later on, your puppy's toy or ball can be substituted for the treat. Most puppies learn very quickly the "kennel up" (or whichever cue you use) means a treat or toy is about to appear in the kennel, and they'd better rush in there.

### Kennel Time:

One of the most important parts of kennel training is making sure you are using it in a manner appropriate for you dog. The kennel is meant as an adjunct to proper training and supervision, not as a substitute. As with anything, the use of the kennel should not be excessive.

Dogs should never be left kenneled for longer than they can control their bladder or bowels. For young puppies, this may mean no more than an hour at a time. Geriatric dogs also need to eliminate more frequently than they did as young adults. Many, but not all, young mature dogs may be able to be kenneled for an entire workday without a break. However, this is not advisable. It is much wiser, and kinder, to arrange for a person to come in and give your dog a walk in the middle of the day. Except for overnight, neither puppies nor dogs should be kenneled for more the 6 hours at a time.

### Kennel Duration Guidelines

<u>Puppy's Age</u>	<u>Provide A Break For Your Puppy After:</u>
8-10 weeks	Approx. 30-60 minutes
11-14 weeks	Approx. 1-3 hours
15-16 weeks	Approx. 3-4 hours
17 + weeks	Approx. 4+ (6 hours maximum)

### Safety Tips:

1. Collars: There is a slight risk that your dog's collar may get stuck on the metal furnishing of his kennel. As a safety precaution, remove his collar when he is in his kennel.
2. Children and the kennel: Don't allow children, or adult strangers for that matter, to bother you dog while he is in his kenneled. The kennel is meant to be a quiet spot for your dog to rest and it is unfair to expect him to be confined in this manner while children taunt and tease him.
3. Warm/cold weather concerns: Make sure the kennel is kept in an area where your dog is protected from the elements and extremes in temperature. This is especially true for the hairless variety.
4. Never leave an unsupervised dog inside a car during warm weather, whether in a kennel or not.
5. Never leave your dog unsupervised in a situation where unfamiliar people or animals have access to him.

### The Kennel As A Housetraining Aid:

The essence of housetraining is being a good doggie time manager. That means making sure your dog is in the right place (outside or inside on paper) at the right time (when he needs to eliminate).

In order to get your dog to the right place at the right time you need to know when he needs to eliminate. A kennel is one of the most efficient and effective aids to housetraining because it helps you to accurately predict when your dog needs to eliminate.

Most dogs don't like to soil their resting/sleeping quarters if given adequate opportunity to eliminate elsewhere. So, temporarily confining your dog to a small area strongly inhibits the tendency to urinate and defecate. If your dog does not eliminate while in his kennel, then he is building bladder and bowel control and will need to eliminate when he is released, i.e., he eliminates when you are present to reward and praise him.

When you are home but can't attend to your puppy, let him rest in his kennel and take him on leash to his doggie toilet every hour for very young puppies and a little less frequently as he grows up.

To begin, take your puppy/dog to the same area to eliminate and give him five minutes to do so. This will facilitate developing a dog that goes promptly rather than needing to walk round and round the block before going. (You will appreciate this on a rainy night.) When he goes, enthusiastically praise him and offer three tiny food treats as a reward. The more times he is rewarded, the quicker he will learn to go in the right spot. Now you can take your empty dog for a reward walk or go inside for a play/training session.

*Note: Be sure to kennel your puppy a few times each day when you are home, so that kenneling does not always predict that you are leaving.*

### Long-Term Confinement:

The major purpose of long-term confinement is to restrict "mistakes" to a small, protected area. It is unrealistic to expect a young puppy to have sufficient control to "hold it" for more than a few hours. So, when you need to leave your puppy for longer periods of time, confine him to an area where he has access to a doggie toilet, such as paper or a square of artificial grass turf in a pan. This is a temporary measure until your dog is old enough to be able to "hold it" for longer.

It is important to cover the entire floor with paper so your pup learns to go on paper, not the flooring underneath. While your puppy is confined, he is developing a habit of eliminating on paper because no matter where he goes, it will be on paper.

After a week or so, gradually reduce the area that is papered. Eventually you will only need to leave a few sheets down in that area. If he ever misses the papers, then you've reduced the area too soon. Go back to papering a larger area or even the entire room.

Unless you intend on having an adult dog whom eliminates on paper (as well as outside), you can plan on getting rid of the paper by the time the pup is about 5-6 months old and /or has developed sufficient bladder and bowel control to be able to hold it in his kennel for 3-4 hours in between walks.

### Supervision:

When you are home and want to spend time with your puppy, keep him on a leash by your side or tethered right near you while he rests or play with his toys. This way he can't run around your house and make mistakes. Just as with the long-term confinement are, this is a temporary measure until your dog is house- and chew toy-trained and can be trusted to spend time alone loose in the house. Until, then, he can't get into trouble if you are attached to the other end of the leash.

Every 45-60 minutes take your 8-10 week old pup to his toilet area. The older you pup gets, the less frequently you need to take him to his toilet and the more time he can begin to spend off-leash in one room with you supervising him.

All three of these training aids, short-term confinement, long-term confinement and supervision, are used in an effort to create a dog that can eventually be trusted to spend time in your home when you aren't there. As a general rule, most dogs should not be allowed to roam unsupervised in even just one room until they are at least 9 months old, and up to 2 years in some small breeds. However, some dogs can handle such freedom sooner, and some dogs can't until they are well over a year old.

*Footnote: This method can also be used for a rescue dog, or an adult dog that has been re-homed. Remember, dogs have to very clearly understand our commands before they can do them. Dogs and puppies that have been re-homed or even if you go on vacation might not get the concept of housetraining in a new location. To them everything is different, (sight, scent, and sound), so if they look at you like they're lost, guess what, they are. If you have to use a crate for a few days or weeks till they understand then do so. That's why you crate train in the first place. (A pediatrician was asked by a woman about something her son was doing. She said. "How many times do I have to say the same thing?" His reply was. "You tell him, as many times a day as you need to for as many years as you need to, TILL HE GETS IT.") I now use that same theory when working with dogs or children. What I am getting at is consistency, consistency, and consistency. TILL THEY GET IT!!!!*

Once you feel your dog is eliminating consistently in the appropriate spot and focused on chewing his chew toys, you can start to give your dog unsupervised access to you home. Start with very brief absences with the dog loose in a "puppy-proofed" room (don't leave any particularly enticing items within easy reach). Another option is to close doors of certain rooms or set up some gates. If your five minute absence results in any misbehavior, your dog is telling you he isn't ready, yet. However, if your brief absences are successful, increase them gradually. Train slowly, it is actually the fastest way to develop a dog that can safely enjoy freedom in your home.

#### Mistakes and Accidents:

If you find an accident in the house DON'T Reprimand your dog. All this will do is teach your dog that you don't like to see him eliminate, in which case, he is unlikely to eliminate in front of you outside. Instead, he will do so when you aren't looking, or in a hidden spot – like under the bed.

#### A Day In The Life Of A Puppy:

Wake your puppy as early as you can. Carry him, attaching the leash as you go, to his doggie toilet (either indoors on paper or outdoors on concrete or grass). Use of the leash, even indoors on paper or in a fenced in yard, serves many purposes- you can express immediate approval and you dog learn to go in the specific spot you have chosen rather than all over your lawn. (*This comes in handy when they get older and it's raining, not to mention you only have a very small area to pooper scoop, and it gets them used to pooping on a leash, (I am thinking vacation time again).*)

If you are taking your puppy outdoors, pick an area of about ten square feet as his designated toilet. Pace back and forth - and don't talk to your pup (this will only distract him). If he eliminates, give him lots of praise, tiny treats and play! If he doesn't eliminate within 5 minutes carry him back indoors and hold him in you lap for 5 minutes. Then take him back out to try again. This way your dog will become a prompt eliminator – again useful on a rainy night!

After a successful potty session bring him back indoors for a 15 minute on leash play/training session (which can gradually be increased each week) before tethering your dog to your side or putting him back in his kennel and feeding him breakfast.

After about 45 minutes to an hour carry him back to his doggie toilet and let him relieve himself again. If you will be at home with your puppy throughout the day, continue this routine of taking your dog to eliminate and then play/train every hour or so.

If you leave your home for the day, confine your pup to his long-term area while you are gone for more than 3 hours. When you get home, resume the routine of frequent trips to eliminate.

Make sure your pup's last feeding and watering is at least 4 hours before bedtime so that he has plenty of time to empty out before he goes to bed.

A very young pup should sleep in a long-term confinement area unless you are willing to wake up and take him to his toilet in the middle of the night. In this case your pup can sleep in his kennel by your bed.

When working with an adult dog, follow much the same routine, without the frequency of trips outside or the numerous meals.

#### The Kennel As A Punishment:

**NEVER** use the kennel as a way to punish your puppy or dog. Doing so will cause him to fear the kennel, which means it becomes a less effective training aid.

#### The Kennel As A Time-Out:

While the kennel should never be use to punish your dog, it is very effective as a place for your dog to have a brief time-out. Time-outs help to eliminate unwanted behaviors such as puppy nipping, excessive rowdiness and attention-seeking behaviors such as whining.

Time-outs are most effective if they are delivered as unemotionally as possible. For example: if you puppy is nipping you, step on his leash so that he can't do so. After a few moments initiate play again. For most pups, a few repetitions of this is enough for them to begin to get the idea that nipping people ends all of the fun. But, if your pup isn't making the connection after a few on-leash time-outs, you might consider letting him spend a few minutes in his kennel to get control of himself. Calmly walk him to his kennel and avoid any verbal or physical reprimands. After a few minutes, let him out and try another play/training session.



Following these guidelines will help you to have less stress while training your puppy, and will give you an adult dog who is a joy to own.