

Crate Training your Puppy

The single most important aspect of dog and puppy training is that you reward and praise your dog or puppy each and every time she does the right thing. For example: praise her when she chews her own toys instead of the couch or eliminates outside instead of in the house. The more time you spend with your puppy or dog, the quicker and easier it will be to train her.

The key to house training is to establish a routine that increases the chances that your dog will eliminate in the right place in your presence, so that she can be praised and rewarded; and decreases the chances that your dog will eliminate in the wrong place so that she will not develop bad habits.

It is important that you make provisions for your dog when you are not home. Until your dog is housetrained, she should not be allowed free run of your house. Otherwise, she will develop a habit of leaving piles and puddles anywhere and everywhere. Confine her to a small area such as a kitchen, bathroom or utility room that has water/stain resistant floors. Confinement is NOT crate training.

What is Crate Training?

Crate training can be an efficient and effective way to house train a dog. Dogs do not like to soil their resting/sleeping quarters if given adequate opportunity to eliminate elsewhere. Temporarily confining your dog to a small area strongly inhibits the tendency to urinate and defecate. However, there is still a far more important aspect of crate training.

If your dog does not eliminate while she is confined, then she will need to eliminate when she is released, i.e., she eliminates when you are present to reward and praise her.

Be sure to understand the difference between temporarily confining your dog to a crate and long term confinement when you are not home. The major purpose of confinement when you are not home is to restrict mistakes to a small protected area. The purpose of crate training is quite the opposite.

Short term confinement to a crate is intended to inhibit your dog from eliminating when confined, so that she will want to eliminate when released from confinement and taken to an appropriate area. Crate training also helps teach your dog to have bladder and bowel control. Instead of going whenever she feels like it, she learns to hold it and go at convenient scheduled times.

Crate training should not be abused, otherwise the problem will get drastically worse. The crate is not intended as a place to lock up the dog and forget her for extended periods of time. If your dog soils her crate because you left her there too long, the house training process will be set back several weeks, if not months.

Your dog should only be confined to a crate when you are at home. Except at night, give your dog an opportunity to relieve herself every hour. Each time you let her out, put her on leash and immediately take her outside. Once outside, give her about three to five minutes to produce.

If she does not eliminate within the allotted time period, simply return her to her crate. If she does perform, then immediately reward her with praise, food treats, affection, play, an extended walk and permission to run around and play in your house for a couple of hours. For young pups, after 45 minutes to an hour, take her to her toilet area again. Never give your dog free run of your home unless you know without a doubt that her bowels and bladder are empty.

During this crate training procedure, keep a diary of when your dog eliminates. If you have her on a regular feeding schedule, she should soon adopt a corresponding elimination schedule. Once you know what time of day she usually needs to eliminate, you can begin taking her out only at those times instead of every hour. After she has eliminated, she can have free, but supervised, run of your house.

About one hour before she needs to eliminate (as calculated by your diary) put her in her crate. This will prevent her from going earlier than you had planned. With your consistency and abundance of rewards and praise for eliminating outside, she will become more reliable about holding it until you take her out. Then the amount of time you confine her before her scheduled outing can be reduced, then eliminated.

Mistakes and Accidents During Training

If you ever find an accident in the house, just clean it up. Do not punish your dog. All this means is that you have given her unsupervised access to your house too soon. Until she can be trusted, don't give her unsupervised free run of your house. If mistakes and accidents occur, it is best to go back to the crate training. You need to more accurately predict when your dog needs to eliminate and she needs more time to develop bladder and bowel control.