

Teaching your dog to feel comfortable in a crate can be useful in a range of situations. If introduced correctly, a crate can be a comfortable, safe space your dog can retreat to in overwhelming situations. It can be transported easily, allowing your dog to bring his or her safe space when you are in the car, on holidays or any other situation.

BEFORE STARTING, REMEMBER:

- The crate is meant to be a space your dog can retreat to without being touched or bothered by anyone.
- Crate training is not used to punish your dog.
- It is not used to confine your dog for long periods of time.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step one: Identify a suitable area for the crate. Ideally somewhere quiet but still close to areas of the house where you spend most of your time. Set up the crate with a comfy blanket/bed.

Step two: Leave the crate open and accessible to your dog. Scatter some favorite toys and high value treats (e.g. Kongs, raw bones, | small pieces of chicken) in and around the crate to teach your dog that this is a place where good things happen.

Step three: Once your dog is comfortable going into his or her crate and collecting the things you placed there earlier, start actively rewarding your dog with tasty treats every time he or she chooses to go into the crate.

Step four: You can then progress to building up the time your dog spends in the crate – toss a treat, then while your dog is still in the space, wait a few seconds before tossing the next and so on. You might even ask your dog to lie down while you toss treats to him or her!

Step five: Once your dog is completely relaxed settling in their safe space with something interesting to do, you can begin to close the door for a few seconds while tossing in treats. Open the door and if your dog remains in the space, continue rewarding.

Repeat this several times until you are confident that your dog is comfortable when they are briefly confined with you close by.

Step six: Once your dog is comfortable being confined briefly while you are close by, all you need to do is increase time and distance in small increments.

Take a quick step back, come back immediately and toss a treat. Increase the number of steps you walk away slowly, always returning and tossing a treat immediately. If your dog does not remain calm and relaxed, you need to break it down into smaller steps.

Eventually, you will be able to step out of sight briefly, while your dog remains in their crate calm and settled.

Step seven: After a while, give your dog something long lasting to occupy them while in their crate, then settle yourself nearby (watch TV, read a book, etc).

Ensure you have plenty of tasty treats on you and every so often, toss a treat into the crate.

TIPS *Ensure that you progress at your dog's pace – your dog needs to remain relaxed throughout the process. If they become distressed, you are trying too much too soon. Go back to the step where they were really comfortable and rebuild from there.*

Always give your dog something interesting and long lasting to do in their crate (e.g. Kong, bone, raw hide chew).