



ESL-K9 (English as a Second Language for Dogs)

Crate Training

Create a comfortable, desirable environment for your dog in a crate. Crate training develops a safe, unchanging home for your dog in your home and others', in the car, at the groomers, at a kennel, and at the vets. It simplifies house training and offers an opportunity for a calming space no matter where your dog is.

What kind of crate is best?

- Your dog's crate must fit:
 - large enough to stand up, turn around, and lie down in comfortably.
 - During housetraining the crate should not be large enough for your puppy to potty inside in a discreet location away from the bedding area.
- Style, is up to your dog's personal preference:
 - Plastic, airline-type kennels are more protective for a dog who prefers safety and solitude.
 - Wire cages allow better air-flow and visibility for a dog who wants to stay connected to what's outside the crate.

The Steps:

1. Place the crate in a central location so your dog can become familiar with it without being isolated.
2. Make the crate homey, include soft bedding, toys, and treats. This is your dog's room.
3. Leave the door open: allow your dog to examine the crate without fear of being confined in it.
4. Feed all meals in the crate with the door open.
5. Start closing the door for short periods once your dog is comfortable entering and remaining in the crate.
 - Try confining your dog in the crate during her/his meal (10 minutes).
 - Remain visible in the room with your dog to minimize feelings of confinement.
 - Only let your dog out when he/she is calm and quiet.
 - If your dog is visibly upset, proceed more slowly in the confinement and/or get help from a professional trainer.
6. Increase length of time confined in the crate as long as your dog is comfortable. Try watching a movie or reading a book in the same room for an hour or so.
7. Begin leaving the room and house for variable lengths of time while your dog is confined. Be intentionally random on length of time.

Tips:

- Remove any collars/tags that could become stuck in the cage. **NEVER leave a choke-type collar on your dog when he/she is not VERY closely monitored!**
- Only release your dog from the crate when she/he is calm and quiet. However know when your dog is trying to communicate a need to use the bathroom.
- Confine your dog for a reasonable amount of time considering his/her bathroom break needs. Young puppies should be given an opportunity to use the bathroom every 2-4 hours as needed.
- Keep the crate close to the action initially. During the night the crate should be located in a bedroom with a sleeping person.
- Try covering a wire cage with a light sheet when your dog needs a calmer space.
- Provide safe toys and treats in the crate when your dog is confined.
- Crates are useful for a “time out”. Set a timer for 20 minutes. Only increase time if your dog is barking when you are ready to let her/him out. Remember time-outs are not punishment so make sure you calmly take your dog to the crate and insure your dog has something he/she likes to do in the crate, a toy or treat enjoyable while alone is perfect. Check out Kong toys and stuffing suggestions online.
- If your dog is panicking in the crate, calm her/him with your voice and presence. Wait for barking to stop even for an instant before opening the door to release your dog. At this point is strongly recommended that you seek help before continuing crate training. A small percentage of dogs never become acclimated to the confinement and may injure himself/herself in a panic.