

Crate Training

Crate training is habit you want to start immediately. A crate is a great tool to help with potty training as well as way to keep your dog confined until they know the household rules. It is also helpful to have a crate trained dog when you have visitors, a service person comes over, or if you take your dog on vacation with you.

You want your dog to like their crate and to find comfort in it. Place toys, something comfortable like a crate mat, towel, or dog bed, and a couple of treats in the crate, this will encourage your dog to check the crate out. Start by putting the crate in a room that the family spends a lot of time in, with the door open. Do not force your dog into the crate.

Praise your dog when they go in the crate to check it out and get the treats. When they are comfortable going into the crate, close the door for a few seconds, then reward them through the door. Let them out immediately. Repeat this step several times, gradually increasing the time from a few seconds to minutes.

Next, stuff a Kong with an extra special treat, use a chew toy, or spread some peanut butter, banana, wet dog food, or pumpkin on a Lickimat. Put the Kong, chew toy, or Lickimat in the crate, allow your dog to enter, and shut the door. Move around the house as you normally do. Check on your dog every few minutes, then open the door and let them out after about 10-15 minutes, while they are still working on the Kong, enjoying the chew toy, or Lickimat. If your dog seems to be finishing the treat before 10 minutes is up, go ahead and let them out sooner. You want your dog to want to be in their crate. The best way to do this is by teaching your dog to associate the crate with wonderful treats. Repeat this step several times, making your absences longer each time. You can also feed your dog meals in their crate.

Crate your dog at night. I recommend putting the crate in your bedroom or the bedroom of another family member, so the dog feels more comfortable and like they are a part of the family.

If your dog whines and demonstrates they are uncomfortable in the crate, you should let them out for a quick potty break. Do not play with your dog during this time. Once they have finished with the potty break, they should return to their crate.

If your dog is showing signs of distress and aversion to the crate, do not force them to stay in it, it will only make how they feel about the crate worse. Please contact me for support if your dog is showing signs of distress when crated.

Ultimately your goal with crate training is to create a place that is comforting and calm for your dog. Do not use the crate for punishment. And do not use the crate only when you leave. If you ask your dog to go to their crate right before you leave and that is the only time your dog uses it, they will start to associate the crate with you leaving and may develop an aversion to the crate.

For questions, please contact Kris at 770-971-6093 or kris@bestindog.com
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