

It's A Dog's World™

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Crates & Dog Runs

CRATES

Many people believe that their dogs view crates as cages and, as a result, they will not consider crating their beloved buddy. Yet, a crate to a dog is far from a prison; it's often a safe and secure sanctuary. If introduced properly, many dogs come to love their crates.

Dogs are descendants of wolves and, as such, are den animals that naturally crave dark, snug spaces. To love a crate, though, a dog has to get used to it gradually and associate it with treats, praise from the owner, long safe naps, and protection from children or other animals.

Reasons for Crating

A crate not only can be a safe haven but it can guarantee that a puppy will make no mistakes. Because healthy dogs will not usually go to the bathroom where they sleep, a properly sized crate can help your dog learn to not soil in the house. A crate also prevents your dog from chewing the furniture, while also providing an easy and safe way to transport your dog. It has also been proven that a dog that is used to being in a crate will be much less stressed if the dog ever needs to be confined for medical or emergency reasons.



Types of Crates

Crates are available in molded plastic or collapsible metal. There are even wooden dog crates designed to look like pieces of living room furniture! Plastic crates are permitted by airlines for shipping and can provide a darker, more den-like space.

The crate you choose should be only large enough for your dog to stand, turn around, and lie down in without being too cramped, but not much bigger than that. If the crate is too large, your dog may choose to go to the bathroom in one end. If you purchase a crate when your dog is a puppy, you may decide to purchase one with an adjustable partition so that you can enlarge the interior space of the crate as your puppy grows.

You may wish to line the bottom of the crate with a towel or soft blanket, or purchase a ready-made liner. However, if you are using the crate to assist in housebreaking your dog, be sure that your dog is not using the towel to eliminate on.

Introducing the Crate

When you first bring the crate home, do not immediately shove your dog in it and close the door. Instead, go slowly. Start by throwing a few treats into the crate and allowing your dog to go in and out. Be sure to praise your dog when it shows interest in the crate,

especially if he goes inside. After your dog successfully goes in and out of the crate a few times, you can try closing the door with your dog inside. Wait a few seconds and, as long as your dog is quiet and not struggling to get out of the crate, you can open the door and give your dog lots of praise.

If your dog whines or barks, do not reward him with attention or try to calm him down. It is important to wait until your dog is quiet before you praise or release him. Keep the crate close to where the dog's family spends most of their time, moving the crate to the bedroom with you at night (for convenience, you may wish to purchase two separate crates).

Sometimes your dog may whine or cry in the crate because he is either bored or he needs to go to the bathroom. Be sure when you put your dog in his crate that you provide your dog with a highly motivating toy or chew treat which will keep him occupied. It's also a good idea to exercise your dog and make sure he's had a chance to go to the bathroom before you crate him for long periods of time. If your dog continues to whine and cry, you can try covering the crate with a blanket or towel. The extra darkness may encourage your dog to settle down.

Length of Crate Time

Remember that your dog will need frequent time for exercising and play, so your dog shouldn't be kept in the crate around the clock. So what is the correct amount of time in a crate?

If you are crating your dog at night for a period of 6 to 8 hours, then your dog should not be crated for longer than a total of 4 hours during the day. In other words, your dog shouldn't be in his or her crate for more than a combined total of 12 hours in any 24 hour time period.

Remember, too, that while it is all right to use your crate as a "Time Out" space, you do not want to put your dog in the crate while using an angry tone of voice, otherwise he may learn to fear or resent the crate. As difficult as it can be, especially if you've come home to a huge, destructive mess or a housebreaking accident, it is important that you keep your voice as neutral as possible while encouraging your dog to go into the crate.

DOG RUNS

The key to getting a well-behaved dog is to manage your dog properly. If you allow your dog to have full reign of the backyard while you are at work, chances are your dog will not receive a correction when chewing on the hose or the air conditioning wires around the A/C unit. The only way to truly prevent your dog from getting up to mischief and to give you peace of mind is to confine your dog during the day while you are gone. Usually, a dog run is the best tool to use for this purpose. There are several benefits to using a dog run. They are as follows:



- Allows you to keep your dog away from objects that s/he may destroy or hurt her/himself on while you are away.

- Gives him or her a cement surface to go potty on, making it easy to clean and therefore keeping brown spots from ruining your beautifully manicured lawn.
- Gives your dog a cement surface to stay on during the day preventing him or her from getting muddy or dirty, thereby making it more enjoyable to allow him or her to live in the house.
- Gives you peace of mind knowing that he or she has not escaped or been stolen out of your backyard.
- Allows your gardeners, pool man, gasman, or construction workers access to your yard without you having to worry if they secured the gate properly before leaving the yard.
- Allows you to separate your dog from guests or children when having a party, etc.

So, during the day while you are gone, you may want to use your dog run. While you are home or sleeping, you may want to use the dog crate. You are not forced to use these. They are just suggestions that have been successful for many dog owners.