

## **Crate Training**

Crate training is a powerful tool, but it has garnered a negative reputation in certain circles. This is because some owners incorrectly use crates as a punishment, when in reality, the crate is meant to be a safe, comfortable spot for your dog to rest in when you can't attend to them. With proper training and a bit of patience, dogs can learn to stay crated for several hours without accidents, enjoying toys to chew & soft things to snuggle as they wait for their owners to return. Here's how to crate train your dog at home!

### **Step One: Look over Here!**

Make sure you have some small, tasty treats handy. Stand next to the open crate door, & if your dog looks at the crate, say YES & give them a treat. Repeat this step a few times.

### **Step Two: Come over Here!**

Next, don't treat your dog if they only look at the crate. Wait for them to take a step towards the inside of the crate. When you see movement towards the crate, say YES & give them a treat. Repeat this step a few times.

### **Step Three: Come on in!**

If your dog successfully moves towards the crate, try throwing a treat into the crate. If your dog goes in, tell them YES, & allow them to come back out if they want. If your dog doesn't want to leave the crate, throw a treat out onto the floor & say BREAK. Repeat this step a few times.

### **Step Four: Hunker Down!**

Once your dog goes into their crate easily, give them a number of treats before they leave the crate. This will help your dog to create a positive association with staying in the crate. The goal of this step is to get your dog to enter the crate without being treated.

### **Step Five: Shut the Door!**

Next, close the crate door (don't latch it!) & treat your dog while the door is closed. Then, open the door immediately to let the dog out, tell them BREAK, & throw a treat on the floor to get them to leave the crate. Repeat this step a few times. Once you are successful with this step, repeat it, but latch the door closed this time.

### **Step 6: Go the Distance!**

Now, increase your distance from the crate before you let your dog out. Occasionally return to the crate to treat your dog if they behave. Your ultimate goal is to move out of sight of the crate without getting a negative reaction. Initially decrease the time you leave your dog in the crate as you increase the distance, but you can work on increasing both distance & time as your dog is successful. Repeat this step, increasing distance & time, until your dog is successful for extended periods of time.

## **Reminders**

- If your dog reacts negatively at any point, go back to the last step your dog was successful at & start again from there.
- Be patient! Breaking old habits & making new ones is a lot of work, but worth it in the end!