

## ***Benefits of Using a Crate***

### ***Safety & Security***

Canines have a definite instinct to hide out in dens. If they do not have one available, they will 'make their own.' We frequently see our dogs under desks, the dining room table, or anywhere they can fit. What this behavior is all about is a canine's natural desire to have a place he can call his own.

Many people dislike the idea of 'caging' their dog, feeling as if it is cruel and somehow hampering his freedom. This is not true! A dog will often seek out the refuge of his crate when he's tired, stressed, or just wants to be away from it all. To him it is not a cage, but rather an indoor doghouse that he feels secure in.

A crate also offers a means of keeping your puppy or dog safe when you are not able to watch them or be in the same room. Think of the crate the same way you think of a playpen for a human child. Even if you are only leaving the room for a "minute," either take the puppy with you or use the crate. After all, you would not leave a toddler in the house alone "for just a minute" would you?

### ***House Training***

A popular method of housebreaking involves the use of a crate. Dogs do not like to soil their beds because they would be forced to lay in the mess. Most pups will control their bladder and bowels for a longer time than we would expect. Young puppies, at 8 or 9 weeks of age can often last for 7 or 8 hours, however, we would never recommend leaving them unattended in a crate for that long in most circumstances.

During housebreaking, whenever the puppy is inside the home but cannot be watched, he is placed in the crate. This might be while you are cooking, reading to the children, or even away from the home. The last thing you do before you put the puppy in the crate is take him outside & give him a command to go "potty". Always use the same command so that the puppy begins to associate the action of relieving himself with the command you give. The first thing you do when you take the animal out of the crate is another trip outside. No food or water goes in the crate, just a blanket and maybe a chew toy to occupy his time. Overnight is definitely crate time. As your faith in the puppy grows, leave him out for longer and longer periods of time.

Most people do not recognize an important advantage of crate training. It does more than just stop the animal from messing in the house. It also teaches the puppy something very important. The puppy learns that when the urge to urinate or defecate occurs, he can hold it. Just because the pup feels like he needs to relieve himself, the pup learns that he does not have to. This is thought to be the main reason why puppies that have gone through crate training have fewer mistakes later on.

Make sure you buy the right size cage. Using too large of a crate can often defeat the purpose of using the crate. The puppy will go to one corner of the cage and urinate or defecate.

Praise your puppy when things go right. Don't let this be a situation where your only action is saying "No" when they are caught in the midst of using the wrong area. If they do it right – let them know! If you do not catch your puppy doing it, then do not punish him for it! Especially if he did it more than 30 seconds ago! At this point in his life a puppy's memory is very, very poor.