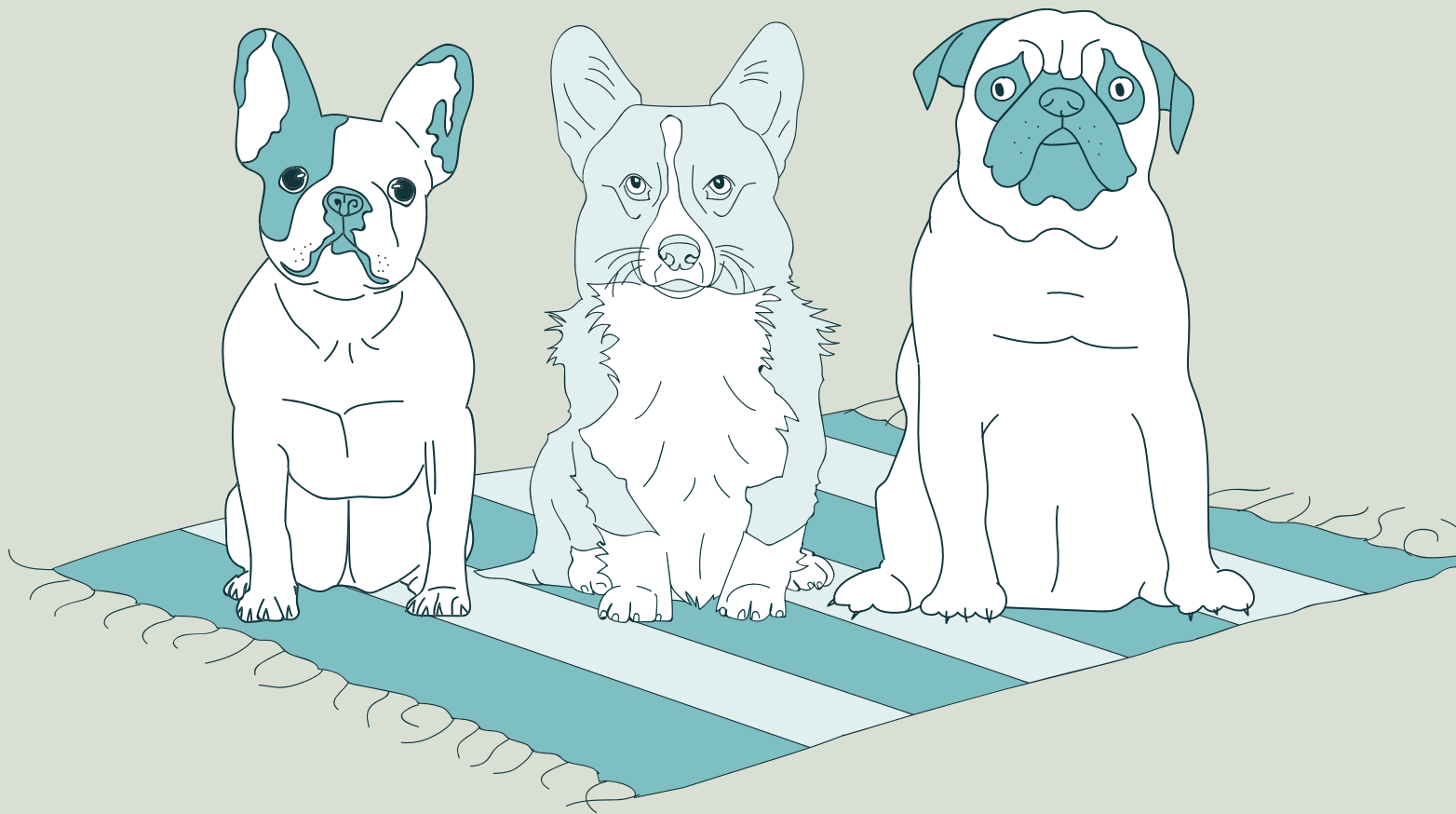


The Ultimate Crate Training Guide



Contents

Chapter One - What is Crate Training	4
Chapter Two - Why Should I Crate Train?	9
Chapter Three - Five Things to Know Before Getting Started	13
Chapter Four - Setting Up Your Dog's Crate	22
Chapter Five - Rewarding Good Behavior	34
Chapter Six - Introducing The Open Crate	43
Chapter Seven - Closing the Crate Door	50
Chapter Eight - Post-Exercise Chill Out	55
Chapter Nine - Home Alone	61
Chapter Ten - Leaving the Door Open	66
Chapter Eleven - Separation Anxiety	71
Chapter Twelve - Crate Training an Older Dog	80



chapter one

What is Crate Training

Welcome to the Ultimate Crate Training Guide! Here, we'll walk you through the art of crate training your four-legged friend in a calm, positive, and would you believe it, fun way.

Using tried and tested rewards-based training, we'll help you achieve the best results for you and your pooch.

It doesn't matter whether you're the proud owner of a newborn puppy, the adoptive parent of a senior pound pooch, or the dog showing Queen of Beagles - this guide will encourage, educate, and assist with bettering your dog's crate acceptance!

Before we get started on the ins and outs of how we train a dog to enjoy being inside of the crate, let's take a closer look into what crate training really is, the situations in which it may come in handy, and how it fits perfectly with your canine's nesting instinct.

What crate training a Puppy Is

A modern dog crate is, in essence, your fluffy friend's very own bedroom. It's where he can go to have a nap after a long hike, take a break from the noise when you have a bunch of guests over, or rest while you're not at home.

Dogs have what is known as “nesting” or “den” behavior - they will often seek out a sheltered, small area to rest in order to feel secure. This instinct is easiest to spot in dogs who are sick or with puppies, but all dogs do, in fact, exhibit this behavior and thrive in a den-like environment. If you think about it, you've probably noticed that your



dog has a favorite spot he likes to lay down in the backyard or cuddle up in the living room - this is, in essence, his self-created comfort zone.

A crate allows us dog parents to make the king of all comfort zones and give our dogs that splash of luxury, security, and comfort that they crave and deserve.

To train your dog to do, or accept, anything new, you first need to have the right mindset. Dog training is not telling a dog what to do and insisting that he obey. Instead, it involves learning how to communicate with him in a language he understands and show your enthusiasm for his steps in the right direction. And that, my dog-loving friends, is how we positively crate train a dog.



What crate training a Puppy Is Not

Now that you know what a dog crate is, let's also quickly discuss what it is not. A dog crate is not a tool for confining your dog, and it is never a tool for punishment.

Too many dog owners view a dog crate as a tiny prison that should be used to lock up and confine a dog. This not only flies in the face of the dog's own nesting instinct, but it also undermines your training. By going into crate training with a negative connotation of the crate itself, that negative energy will weasel its way into your whole training program.





Going at Your Dog's Pace

We'll walk you through the crate-training process step-by-step and explain how you can tell what the right pace is for your pooch. Just like us, each dog is unique, and where some may find crate training a breeze, others will be more reminiscent of ourselves during an advanced calculus class!

chapter two

Why Should I Crate Train?

I know what you're thinking, "Why should I teach my dog to go in a crate, isn't that cruel?" or "Isn't that unnecessary?" well, the answer to both is a big, fat, resounding no.

When you introduce it properly, a crate is a great addition to any dog-owning home. It's a safe and secure place for your dog to just chill out, spend secluded time away from the household (screaming kids, anyone?), and essentially, have his very own doggie bedroom.



Reasons You Should *utilize* a Dog Crate!



To Avoid Problems

A great way to keep your pet out of trouble when you leave the house! Many dogs inadvertently get into mischief when you're gone - this can be for a number of reasons, from sheer energy to boredom, and even separation anxiety.

None are reasons to be angry with your dog (he is a dog, after all!), but they do give you even greater reasons to start on your crate training adventure.

To Enjoy Travel

Most of us consider our four-legged friends to be a part of the family, and when you embark on a family holiday or road trip, you definitely don't want that fluff bucket to miss out just because he's not good at car trips, or the hotel has a dog crate policy, do you? Of course not, you want to bring along your collapsible dog crate and have the trip of a lifetime!



To Make House Training Easy

No dog wants to wet his own bed, and by utilizing the small area of a crate -- as opposed to your entire home -- along with great timing and some patience, your furry friend will easily learn to 'go' only when let out.

More details of how to use a crate to potty train are included later in this guide!



To Make Visits Stress Free

If your dog tends to get worked up, overly excited, or very nervous when you have guests over, you're going to fall in love with the wonders of the crate.

Many owners with dogs that tend to become beyond rambunctious when friends come over assume that the crate will only exacerbate the problem, when actually, if taken, slow, a modern dog crate can transform a dog into unrecognizably calm.



To Give Your Dog a Safe Space

When your new dog or puppy first arrives home, it's natural that he'll want to explore his surroundings, but this can actually be a little dangerous as he's learning the lay of the land.

If your home has a large staircase, open landing, lots of visible wiring, or houseplants, you don't want to leave Fido with the run of the house until he has learned to navigate it safely (and following your rules!)

To Recuperate

We all injure ourselves at some point or another in life, and for those high energy dogs that love nothing more than running through the forest chasing squirrels, wrestling with friends, or jumping off piers into the ocean, you'd best be prepared for an emergency one day.

And if something does happen, let me tell you, treatment and recovery will be so much faster and easier if your dog knows that he's meant to rest when crated.

chapter three

Five Things to Know Before Getting Started

When welcoming your new puppy home, you may be tempted to pamper them silly, buy them tons of toys, and think about training later on!

But, did you know that as soon as your puppy is old enough to come home with you that he's old enough to start learning the joys of the crate? Not to mention, starting early on is far easier than trying to get your pup to unlearn ingrained and mischievous behaviors, believe me!

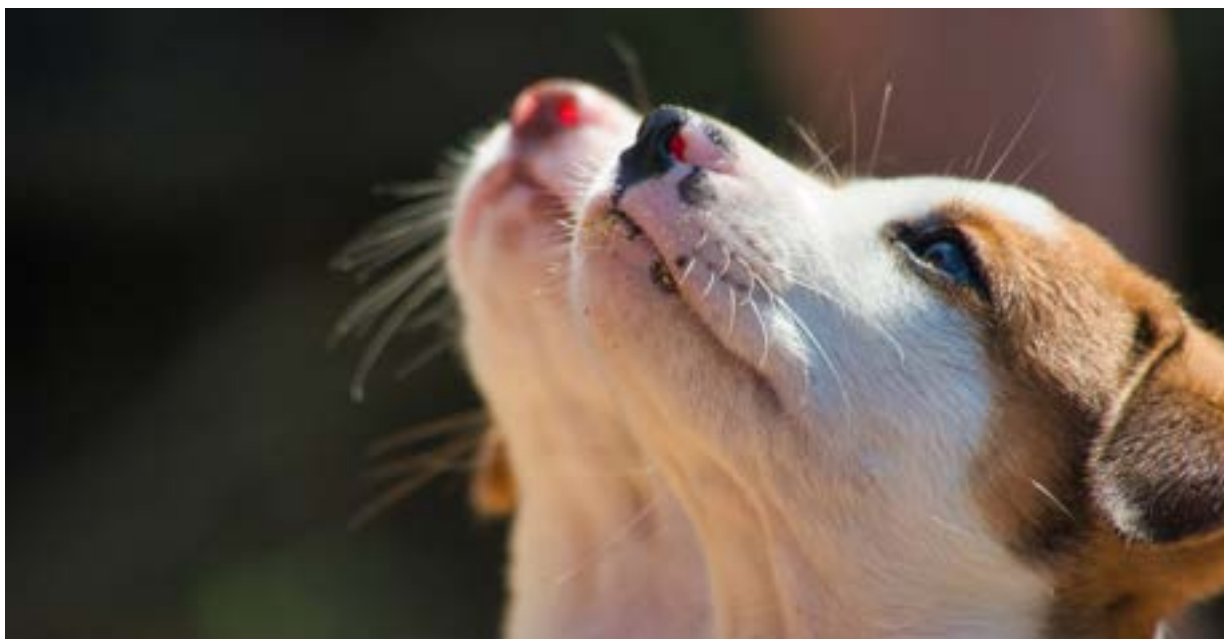


1. Short and Sweet Training Sessions

When you start training your puppy, the first thing to note is that you should keep training sessions short and sweet.

The absolute maximum time that you want to spend training your dog to accept his crate is **fifteen minutes**. As his doggie parent, it's up to you to keep an eye on his body language and decide when it's time to quit for the day.

Pacing, chewing at the crate, or even themselves, are common indicators that they've had enough; alongside the most common - whining, and barking.



2. How Long to Crate by Puppy age

With teeny tiny bladders, an eight-week-old puppy simply can't be expected to spend hours at a time in a crate.

To make your training program a little easier, let's start by running through the maximum time you'll want to be crate training a puppy!

8-10 Weeks

Half an hour to one hour

11-14 Weeks

One to three hours

15-16 Weeks

Three to four hours

17+ Weeks

Four to five hours

BEFORE GETTING STARTED

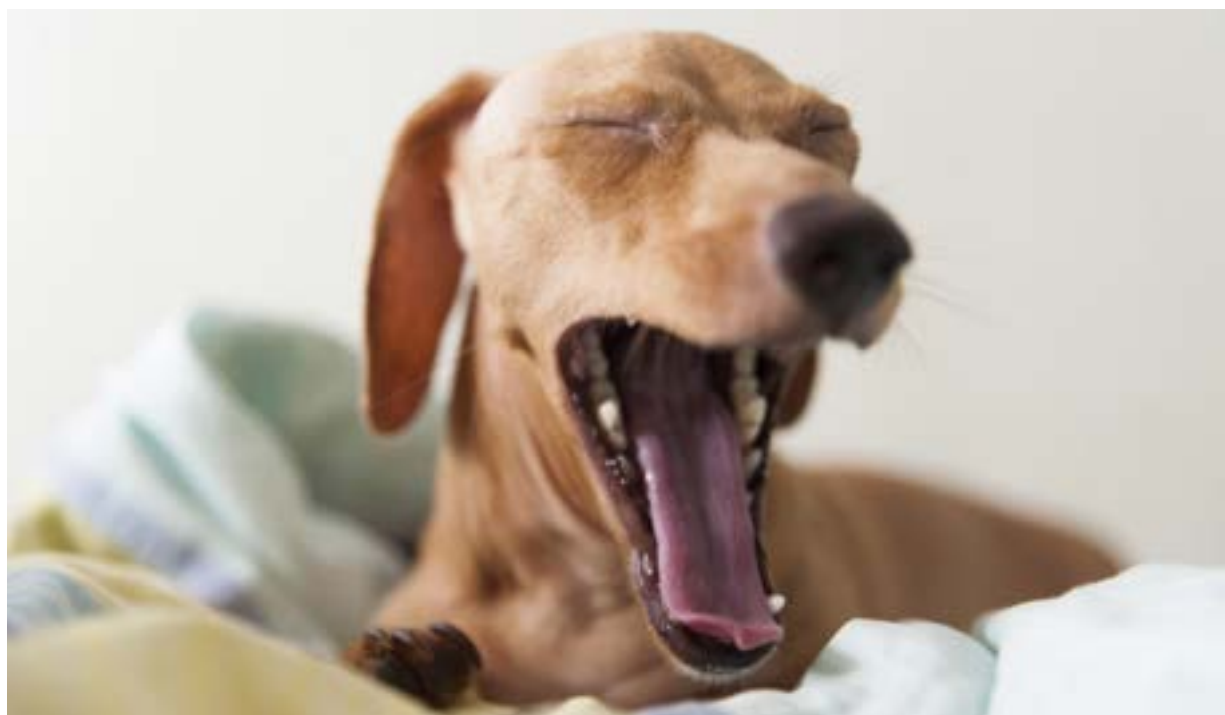
Overnight Crating

Adult dogs that are incredibly well trained and happy with their crates can be left inside overnight for an absolute maximum time of nine hours, but we don't suggest making this a daily occurrence unless the crate door is left open.

While it is also possible to have a puppy in a crate overnight, you will need to set your alarm to let them out to relieve themselves every few hours, and even more frequently for younger pups!

For young puppies just learning about the world, spending too much time in a crate is bad for a couple of reasons, the first being that they're more likely to have accidents; this can form a habit of going potty when in the crate, and one that's hard to break.

The second is that if they're spending hours upon hours in the crate, they'll become bored and lonely - and associate going into the crate, with those feelings. This can lead to your puppy hiding when you ask him to go into his crate - definitely not what we're aiming for.



3. Top Tips for Easy Bedtimes

Have a Bedtime Routine

Try to establish a routine, with dinner time, potty time, and quiet time all taking place at the exact same time leading up to bed.

Last Minute Potty Break

As part of your routine, make sure you let your puppy out to relieve himself just before you go to bed. In the first weeks, you will probably need to let him out a few times through the night.

Stick with it

It's absolutely normal for your puppy to whine or cry while in his crate. After all, you just had a super fun day together, and he doesn't want the party to end just because it's bedtime! But as his pet parent, you need to teach him how to get his beauty sleep, which means not letting him out if he stamps his little paw or cries. I know this might mess with your beauty sleep, and it can be upsetting to hear your new fluff ball cry to be with you, but I promise it will soon be worth it to both of you! If you absolutely must let him out, wait for him to quiet down so he does not feel rewarded for crying.

4. Have No Expectations

Crate training can be a great time to bond with your new dog as he joins your family, and also helps ensure your role as alpha of the pack while setting up the ground rules for a happy home.

When crate training, try to focus on each training session and not on the results you expect or any deadlines you have set yourself.

That way, you can enjoy your journey to a crate-trained dog and, wouldn't you know it, the more patient and relaxed you are during training, the better the results you're likely to achieve!

BEFORE GETTING STARTED



5. Expect Setbacks

It's perfectly normal for your puppy to have bad days, where the training is tough and it feels like you're going backward. But don't let this get you down. Just finish on a good note -- this can be as simple as asking your pup to do simple tricks and enjoying a few moments together -- and start fresh tomorrow!

6. Looking After a Modern Dog Crate

As with any purchase that you make, you have to look after whatever you buy - and a crate is no different. Keeping your dog's crate clean is incredibly important to avoid any unwanted bacteria or parasites which can not only lead to illness for your pooch but any member of your family.

Top Tip - Natural cleaning solutions such as water and vinegar can be a great option if your dog suffers from environmental allergies.



The best way to keep your crate clean is to have a deep clean at least every other week. In order to do this, you'll want to remove all toys, bowls, and bedding - then take your crate outside (or into a tiled room), and wash down thoroughly using a pet-safe cleaning product.

Once your crate is freshly cleaned, it's imperative that you wash down their bowls, toys, and bedding prior to placing it back into the crate as otherwise, you're just going to be popping the bacteria straight back in.



Keeping your crate clean, and well maintained helps it to stand the test of time. It is worth having a thorough check over the crate around once per month, and look out for any rust, damage, or sharp edges - remember, all of these things can be easily fixed if caught quickly enough.

Buying a crate designed for indoor only use and then putting it out into the yard is also a really bad idea, as if there are any metal components - it can cause rust really quickly.

chapter four

Setting Up Your Dog's Crate

When you're welcoming a new bundle of fur into your home, you'll want to do your best to give him the warmest of welcomes!

While you might think that means hitting up the local pet store to pick up a toy and some tasty treats, the best way to welcome your new pooch is to set-up his crate to be as comfortable as possible.

But this doesn't apply only to new pups. In fact, if you're treating your older dog to his very own crate, you'll want to follow this section of our guide too!

What You'll Need for Your Dog Crate.

1. Bedding
2. Food and water bowls
3. Food-Based Toys
4. Crate-safe Toys

Choosing a Bed

Ideally, you'll want to look out for a crate that comes with an easy to clean, removable base tray. Having a tray that slides in and out makes cleaning those hard to reach spots a breeze, and if you have a breed that is especially fluffy - this will be a big help to wipe off all of that loose hair!

Other things to think about when choosing a bed for your pooch are:

1. Thicker Padding for Larger Dogs

If you're the proud owner of a gentle giant dog breed, you need to think about the thickness of the dog bed.

While a Chihuahua could lie on a folded towel and have enough cushioning, a larger dog might be uncomfortable or, even worse, de-

velop sores due to their heavier bodies sinking into the ground.

Finding the right thickness of bed and material all comes down to your dogs size and weight. Not to mention personal preference, some dogs love to feel all snuggled up in a big ball of bedding, whereas others can't stand a thick bed. Opting for a medium dog crate bed thickness can be the best option, especially in a multi-dog household.

2. Safe Materials

As dog owners, we all love to spoil our dogs, and make sure that they have the best - so you might be surprised to hear that a shocking amount of dog beds contain harmful chemicals, not only dangerous for your dog - but your entire family too.

A study conducted by the Ecology Center showed that many dog beds can contain toxic poisons including mercury, arsenic, and lead - not something you want in your home, and not something that you want your four-legged friend spending much of their day upon.

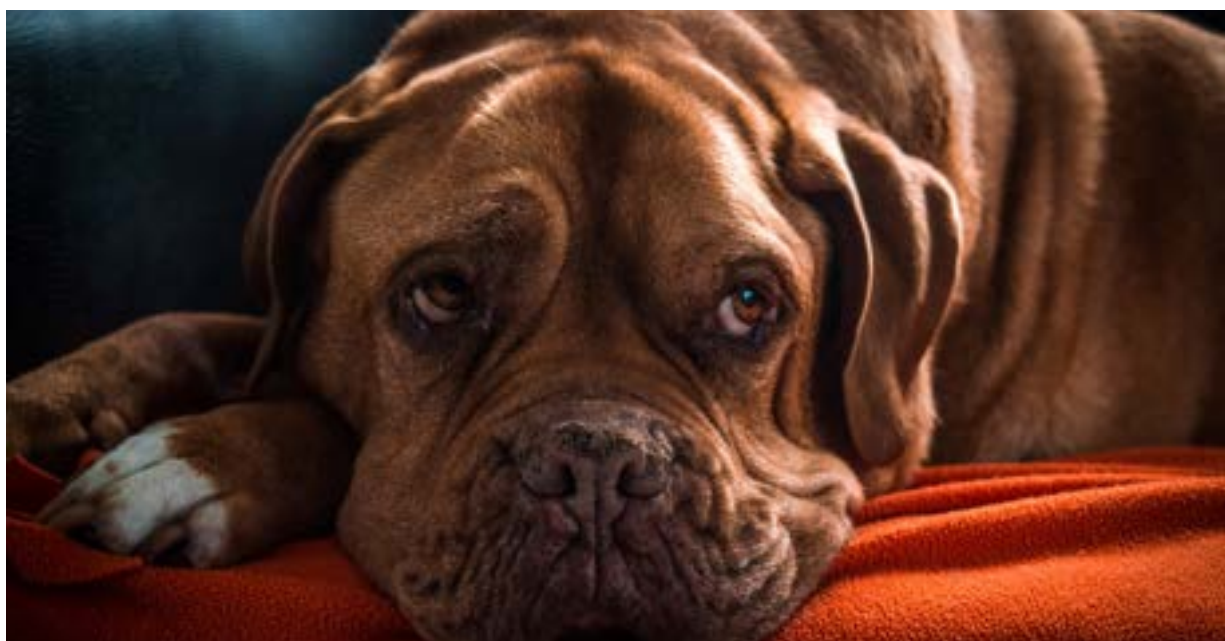
But fear not you lovely considerate dog owners, because there is a non-profit organization called CertiPUR-US that provides accreditation for safe foam products for humans and animals alike. So, look out for their label and rest easy knowing that the product will be:

1. Arsenic, lead, and heavy metal-free.
2. Made without Ozone depletors.
3. Low VOC* emissions for indoor air quality.
4. Made without formaldehyde.
5. And made without dangerous flame retardants.

3. Support for Joint Problems

Another thing to consider when buying Monsieur Pooch a new bed is whether he has any joint or mobility issues. If he does, it might mean that you choose a firmer bed or one with an orthopedic memory foam filling, and one that isn't more than 2" to make it easier for him to step onto.

4. Dealing With Destructive Doggies



Is your fluffy best friend a bit of a bed chewer? If so, it's usually best to avoid beds with a fleece cover that they can get a hold of with their teeth. Also, try to avoid especially bendy beds which fold up at the corners.

5. Accidents Happen

Whether your dog hasn't quite mastered the art of house training yet, or not - you'll still want to look out for a waterproof or water resistant bed cover. Accidents happen, and whether it's from weak bladders, spilled water bowls, or the kids deciding to have a water balloon fight in the house - waterproof covers are always the way to go to avoid moisture getting into the bed and causing a mold or bacteria infestation.

6. Machine Washable Covers

You'll also want to look out for a bed cover that is machine washable to thoroughly clean your dog's bed. Pooches spend a lot of their time in the great outdoors, those lucky ducks!

But it does mean that they often bring dirt, grime, bacteria, and even parasites into the home - most commonly depositing this right onto their doggie bed - which is why you'll want to unzip that bad boy and throw it straight into the washing machine.

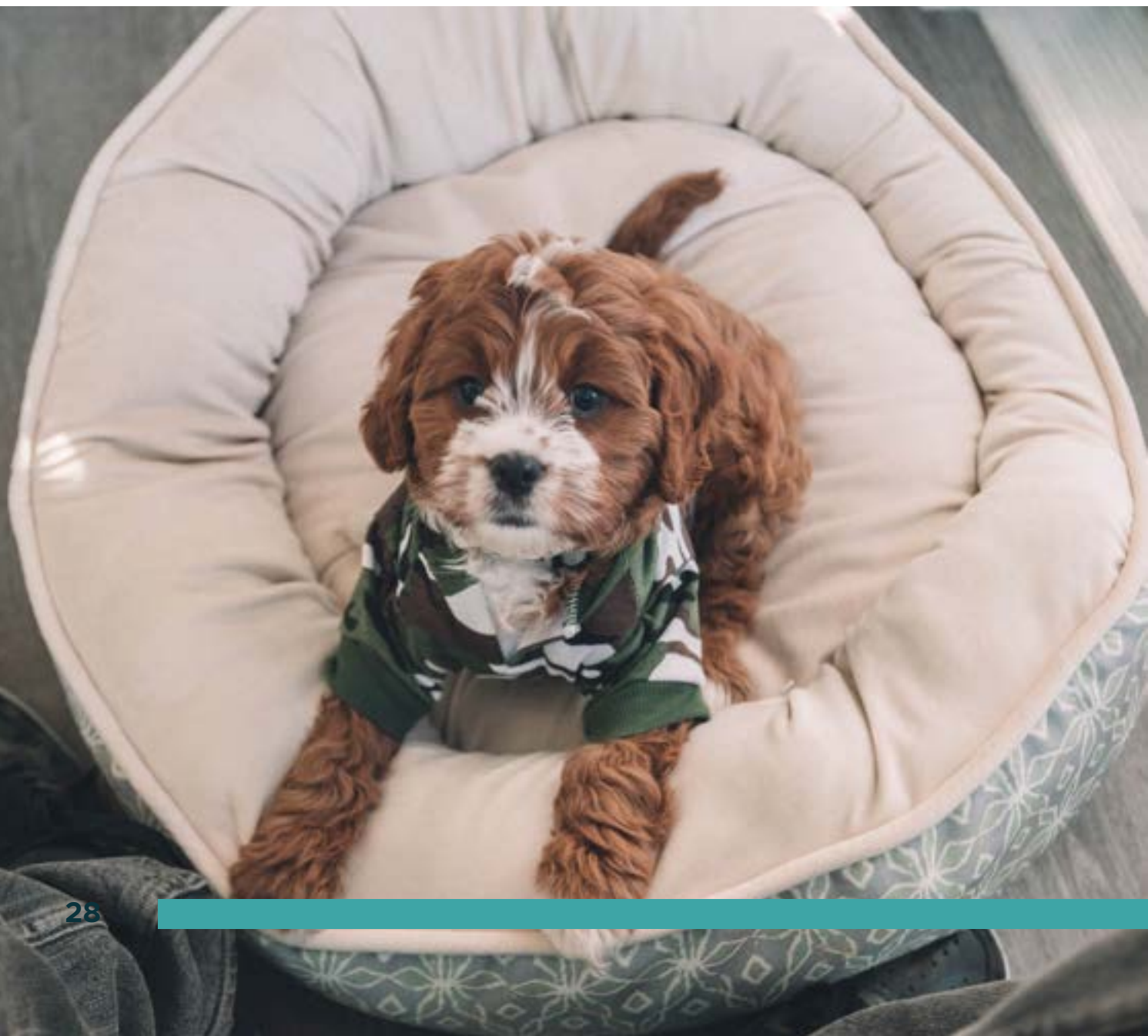
Top Tip - Opt for a color that will look smart and stay looking new, for dog beds, gray can be a great choice!



7. Non-slip

A well fitted non-slip dog bed not only give more traction for little puppy paws, but they also protect the base tray from scratches. Older dogs will also appreciate the non-slip surface, especially if they suffer from joint issues.

Be careful not to buy a bed that will be too small or too large for your crate as this can render the non-slip surface useless and make for a wobbly base.





Food Bowl

Feeding your puppy his meals inside of the crate is a vital step in training him to accept the crate, and teaching him to associate it with a positive experience.

Crate specific bowls are recommended for your dog's food and water, as not only are they narrower and deeper to better fit the available space, but often they will be made from a quality metal which helps to avoid the buildup of bacteria.

No-tip food bowls can be a good choice if he tends to paw at his food! BUT always remember that your dog should never have access to food in their crate without supervision.



Water Bowl

All dogs need fresh water available at all times. Consider buying a clip-on water bowl, these usually clip into a corner or fit snugly against the crate wall, with no sharp edges.

With a water bowl, as bacteria can build up so quickly, we'd recommend finding one that is dishwasher safe!

Alternatively, you can buy a large water bottle, like the one you would give to Buggy the hamster, which can be fitted to the outside of the crate.



Food Toys

Food-based toys can be a great boredom buster for the energetic dog. In fact - I don't know what would we'd do without them! Toys filled with edible treats are a popular way of keeping Fido mentally stimulated while in his crate (but be careful not to add too many extra calories this way, we all know where that can lead)!

It's a good idea to give food that won't make its way out of the crate or pose a choking hazard. A good option here is a spoon of peanut butter spread on the inside of a dog treat cone. But remember to never leave your dog alone with a food toy!



Toys

When you're setting up a cool crate for your dogs, they should be given at least one suitable toy. If you have a few toys, why not rotate them, so every day it seems like there's a new toy!

DO choose a toy that is

- ▶ Inedible
- ▶ Large enough to not be swallowed
- ▶ Too large to be pushed through the crate wall

DON'T choose toys that:

- ▶ Bounce, as this can lead to injury in the crate
- ▶ Have squeakers, as these can be eaten or inhaled
- ▶ Are damaged or severely worn, as parts can be pulled off and cause choking

Top Tip - always remember, you should never leave your dog unsupervised when he has a toy unless the makers of the toy have explicitly stated that the toy is crate-safe or suitable for unsupervised canines.

chapter five

Rewarding Good Behavior

Positive reinforcement is an incredibly popular method to train dogs, and proven time and time again to be not only the most humane but the most effective method of training our canine companions.

But, positively reinforcing an action well done by your dog is a fine art that relies on great timing.

We're going to walk you through a few of the most popular rewards-based training methods and give you a sneak peek into how to apply these to one of your first crate training exercises.

This should help you determine the right method for you and your dog to utilize throughout your crate training experience!

We're not going to get into the nitty-gritty of training in this chapter, you'll find that further along in this book.

Praise-Based Reward Only

Praising your dog for a job well done requires attention on your part, especially when using praise only without a food treat as our examples shown in this section.

You need to react quickly to reward the desired behavior. Taking too long can lead you to inadvertently rewarding the wrong behavior, so pay close attention.

The Three Steps of Praise Reward

1. Encourage the desired behavior
2. Reward the desired behavior
3. Repeat

EXERCISE 1 - Into The Crate

- ▶ To start, you'll need to be in a confined space -- a room in your house will do just fine --, with your dog, your dog crate, and yourself all ready to go.
- ▶ Using a vocal cue such as "Go to bed", you want to point at the crate to encourage your dog to explore his new home. At this stage, don't worry too much about him going right into the crate,

any movement in the right direction is progress!

- ▶ So, you've asked your dog to "go to bed" and he has put one paw in, you can now tell him what a good boy he is, and give him some fuss! In the beginning, we want to always reward even the smallest of steps.
- ▶ But how is this teaching him anything? Good question! Well, over years of co-existing, and even evolving together with humans, dogs have grown to love the sound of our voices - even more so when we raise the pitch and put on an excited tone.
- ▶ They are able to recognize our obvious happiness, in fact, try telling your dog something silly in a high pitched voice and watch his reaction, he'll love it!

Having said that, while training our aim is to keep our dogs in a calm state of mind, so we're not talking jumping up and down and getting him over excited here, just making your praise clear by using a positive tone!



Treat-Based Reward

- ▶ Food rewards are a great example of positive reinforcement!
- ▶ We all know that most dogs are ruled by their stomachs, some more than others - and using this to focus their attention can be a great way to keep aloof or goofy pups focused.
- ▶ You'll want to find out which treats are his very favorite, and make sure you're only giving teeny little pieces so that he doesn't fill up too quickly and stop working for the reward!

Three Super Simple Strategies

1. Hide biscuits in his bedding in the crate
2. Put a spoonful of peanut butter in his food bowl within the crate
3. Fill a dog treat cone with cooked carrot and pop it in the crate

The above strategies are especially simple as they don't require you to be leading the exercise, the treats are merely in the crate - and if Fido works up the courage to go and explore, he'll get a tasty snack for his troubles!

EXERCISE 2 - Into The Crate

- ▶ Start by having all doors to your dog's crate open. Again, you'll want to be in a confined area, and you'll need a small pouch of treats before you get started!

- ▶ Now we're going to take a treat, and throw it into the crate while concurrently giving the cue "Go to bed."
- ▶ If your dog enters the crate -- even if he just leans in to get the treat -- you want to verbally praise him immediately.

Important Note - Before you give your dog a treat, please be aware that some foods, like grapes and chocolate, are unsafe for dogs and should never be given.

Also, many owners like to use cheese when training dogs, but with such a high-fat content - breeds prone to conditions such as pancreatitis should steer well clear of this dairy delight.





Clicker Training

Clicker Training is a way of telling the dog that he has done what you want, just by the sound of a click.

This method was first used on marine animals and has since gone on to be used on pretty much all animals with great success.

When starting training, you'll want to do what is known as "charging the clicker" this is, the act of asking for a known behavior, such as "sit," and praise with a click, treat, and vocal reward for this behavior.

This will help your dog to understand that this click means he has done a good job, by utilizing a command he is already familiar with.

As both of you become more experienced with clicker training, you can move to using only a click, and treat reward, and then ultimately the click will be reward enough.

EXERCISE 3 - Into The Crate

- ▶ Using the vocal cue “Go to bed” you’re going to point to the crate to encourage your dog to go into it. If he takes even one step into the crate, you want to click, treat, and reward immediately.
- ▶ Some dogs will run straight in, others may simply sniff at the crate. Either action is a step in the right direction and should be rewarded.
- ▶ It’s very important to never force your dog into the crate, either by pushing them or pulling their collar/leash. This can form a negative association and cause your dog to feel scared around the crate.

Important Note - Clicker training is great for a highly engaged dog and once he understands the click, great progress can be made. Wait for him to understand the click before expecting results.

Avoiding Negativity or Punishment-Based Training

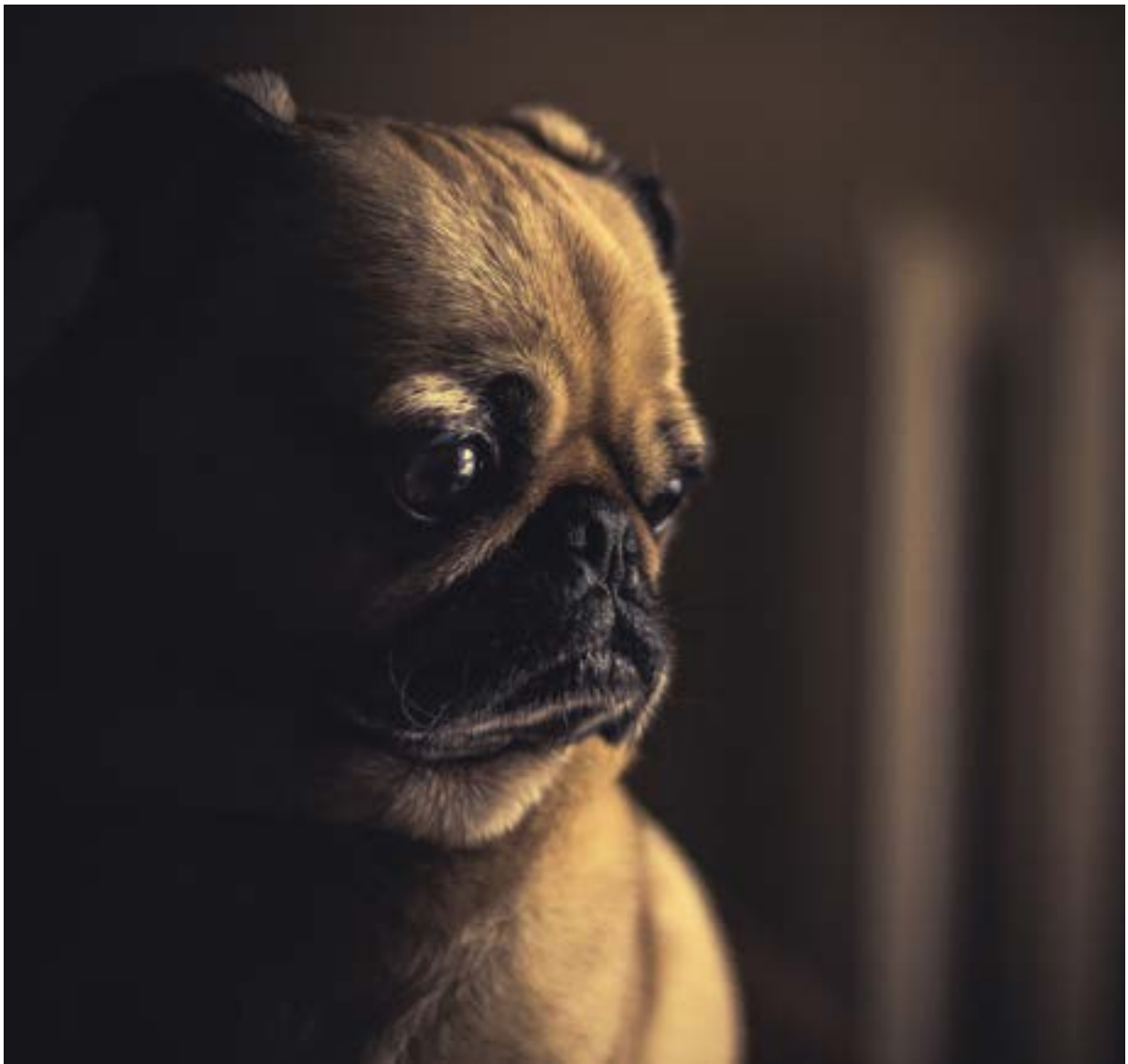
Many dog owners dread training their dogs or going to obedience classes because the exercises they assume that they have to follow - actually make them feel bad. And that right there is the clue that something is wrong.

It used to be commonplace for animals to be “trained” by using vocal or physical reprimands when the dog was to get something wrong - like not sitting when he was asked to.

This has been proven to impact training negatively and can cause a dog to shut down, or become fearful of you. It’s normal for your dog to have his ups and downs, but he should never be punished for a bad training session, or for not understanding your command.

We absolutely never condone negativity-based training and condemn any kind of physical violence against animals.

Some supposed trainers explain away their methods by using positive connotation, this is where they will explain away a bad action



by saying that you can't have the good result without the bad action. Sadly, our dogs have no understanding of why they have to go through something painful or scary to simply become "better trained."

Remember, be patient, be positive, and most of all remember to enjoy the time you spend with your dog, whether you're teaching them something or otherwise.

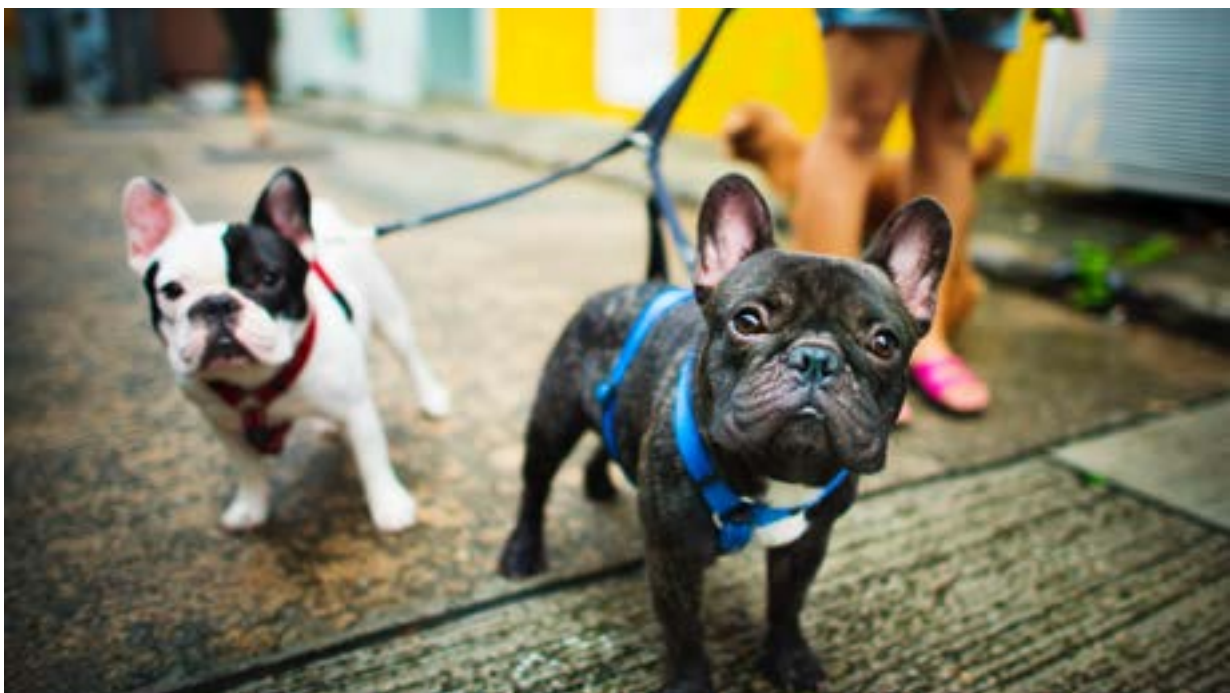
chapter six

Introducing The Open Crate

There are three core principles to follow when introducing your canine pal to the art of crate training, and these are as easy as ABC!

Whether your pup has never set paw into a crate before, or even if he has had a bad experience with a crate, this still rings true:

- A. Associate the crate with something pleasant.**
- B. Back away from using the crate for punishment.**
- C. Complete each step at your dog's pace.**



Seeing The Crate

When you first bring the crate home, set it up without your dog present, as the noises of assembly could spook him.

Once assembled, you can place the crate in the corner of the room where you tend to spend most of your time.

Some crates only open on one side, and others have multiple access points. When you first go about introducing your dog to the crate, you want to make sure that every door is securely held open so that the door doesn't close behind and spook your dog.





Some modern dog crates even feature doors or section that are designed to stay open full-time if needed, ideal for training.

If your dog crate doesn't have this nifty feature, you can do this by popping a cushion in the way of the door, or latching the door against the side of the crate if possible.

At this stage in our training, we're not going to ask anything of our dog, instead, we're getting him used to the idea that this crate isn't a big scary monster, and show him that if his owner likes it, it can't be too bad!

If you want to go above and beyond, sitting on the floor right beside the crate, and resting against it can really boost your pup's confidence in this new contraption.

Step One - In and Out

- ▶ After a few days of getting used to the crate being in the house, you can have your first proper training session.
- ▶ To start, we're going to walk over to the crate and encourage Mr. Puppy to explore inside.
- ▶ Get down to his level and reassure him. A gentle hand can do far more good at this stage than a firm one.
- ▶ Try throwing his toy into the crate and reward him when he goes in. Alternatively, pea-sized treats can be thrown in.
- ▶ We want the puppy to feel as though he's taking part in a game, and not like this is a training session at all!
- ▶ If he doesn't make it into the crate first time, not to worry - just take it slow, and try again later!

Important tip - The aim of this exercise is for your puppy to be freely and happily moving in and out of his crate so it's really important that you don't close the door at this stage.



Step Two - Dinner time

- ▶ Once you've mastered step one and your pup is now happily moving in and out of the crate, we're going to encourage him to fully relax while inside.
- ▶ We do this by feeding him his meals in the crate itself! If your young pooch is quite the nervous little dude, try placing his food bowl outside the crate, near the door, to begin with.
- ▶ Gradually you can move the bowl closer and closer to the crate itself, then inside of the crate, until eventually, you can feed him at the very back.
- ▶ With tiny stomachs, you'll need to feed your pup at least three or four times per day, and this gives ample opportunity to positively reinforce his crate experience.



Important Tip - If there are kids in your household, it is best to instill a strict 'dog only' crate rule. This isn't because the crate is seen as your dog's territory - rather that your dog needs his own zone to get away from everyone, much like we all like to go to our room and be left alone for a little while when we're in a bad mood - your dog needs to be given the same freedom.

We know, kids can be cheeky monkeys and try and get around that "no going in the dog crate" rule by climbing on top of it instead - unfortunately, there have been multiple instances of kiddos doing this, the crate giving way - and their dog becoming crushed. This is a great reason to look for a great with stronger structural integrity, as you never know when your kids might slip up!



Step Three - Go To Bed

- ▶ Now we introduce a command word for going into the crate.
- ▶ Decide on a command word, like 'Crate' or 'Go to bed'.
- ▶ If your puppy has a favorite toy, throw it into the crate and at the same time, say the command.
- ▶ Or if your pup is more food-focused, do the same but with a treat, remember at this stage, it's all about keeping the game fun.
- ▶ After a few repetitions, your puppy should start to anticipate the command, this is a great sign, and if he runs in before you can say the command - consider that a big win, and you should still say the command and praise your puppy immediately.

Important Tip - Try to finish playing the game before the puppy gets bored or tired. The old saying 'Always leave them wanting more' is very appropriate in dog training.

chapter seven

Closing the Crate Door

Congratulations for getting this far! By this stage, your puppy is happy to go in and out of the crate, and is eating all of his meals in there - you're making great progress.

While your puppy may be spending bedtime in the crate with the door closed, we now need to teach him to accept this during the day when things may be livelier around your home - and when he wants to get involved with the fun and games!

When you up the ante, you want to gently train for having the doors closed. This one can spook your little pup, and that's to be expected - the important thing is to take it slow and go at his pace.

In some instances, you may choose to try this exercise out once, and then revert to an open crate session next time - two steps forward and one step back will get you there, too!

Step One - Hold the Door

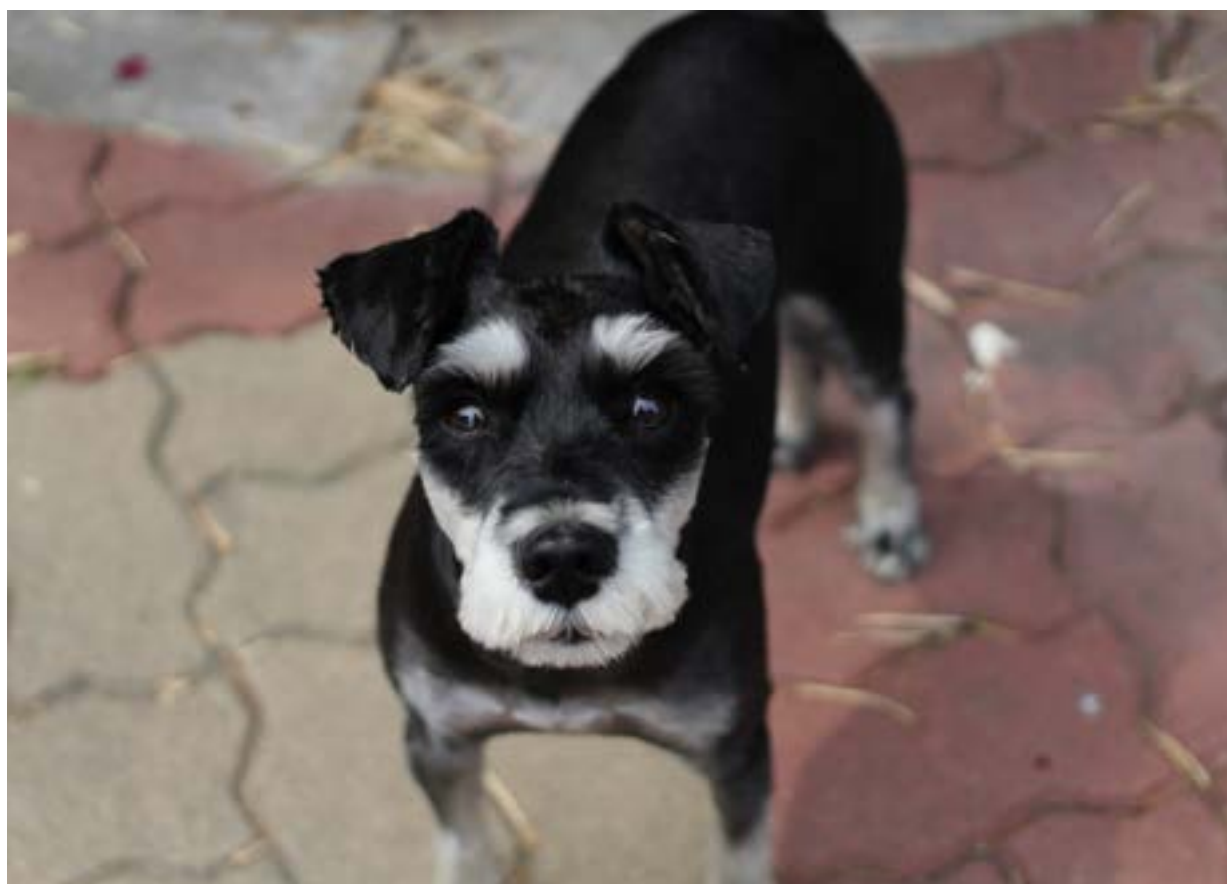
- ▶ You're going to start by feeding your dog in the crate as usual, but this time - you're going to hold the door with your hand and close it very slowly as he's eating.
- ▶ As you wait for him to finish, you can open and close the door a few times, very slowly. We're doing this to show him that he isn't trapped, and he can come and go as he pleases.
- ▶ As training is repeated, you can gradually build up the time it takes for you to open the door.
- ▶ Work up from opening the door a few times as he's eating, to opening it up immediately after he has finished, and then build up to 10 seconds, 20 seconds, one minute and more.

TOP TIP - There are a few dog crates on the market that offer an open-able ceiling (kind of like a dog crate sunroof!), this is a great benefit when training your pooch as it helps to avoid that feeling of confinement and the panic that can accompany this.

Important Note - Close the door gently so you don't startle your pup. If your pup cries, consider that maybe you increased the time too quickly for him, so take a step back and decrease the time you hold the door closed next time.

Step Two - Stay Put

- ▶ Now that your puppy happily eats his meals in the crate and waits patiently for you to open the door, you can start to extend the periods of time he is left in his doggy kingdom.
- ▶ If he does cry, we know it can be tough, but you absolutely should not let him out until he stops crying - and you can let him out as soon as he does, even if he only stops for a couple of seconds. But be quick, so he knows he's not being rewarded for crying! Instead, he needs to learn that if he's quiet and well-behaved, he gets his way!



Step Three - Now You See Me

We are now going to introduce a degree of independence.

This step will take some time, as we're going to build up the distance you are from your puppy while he's in the closed crate.

- ▶ If you normally sit right beside your pup's crate while he's in there, make the move to sitting a little further away, then on the other side of the room, until gradually you can work towards leaving the room entirely.
- ▶ Make sure to do this incrementally, and after having left the room for twenty-seconds, if your pup has stayed quiet, you can walk over to the crate and pass him a treat and tell him he's a good boy.
- ▶ If your puppy makes a big fuss when released from the crate, you must act calm and encourage him to play with his toys and relax.

Important Tip - If you reward his excitement, he'll start to get overly exuberant at seeing you. This can lead to problems as the anticipation of you returning home will become very stressful for him. As flattering as it is, it's much better to have a calm dog than an over-excited one.



Step Four - Just a Treat

The last step in acclimatizing your pup to go into the crate and be left with the door closed is to remove the final crutch: his food bowl. This allows him to be fully present in the situation rather than relying on distracting him from his environment.

Start by asking him to go into the crate and giving him a treat when he does so.

At this point, you can calmly close the door, and wait for a period of time before re-opening. As he becomes more comfortable with this, you can increase the time he's in there - and the distance you are from him.

chapter eight

Post-Exercise Chill Out

If your dog happens to be energetic or overly anxious, training after an intensive exercise session could be your key to easy crate training.

So, why does it make a difference if your dog is tired? Well, as in previous sections of this guide, you'll notice that we often refer to a crate as a "Doggie bedroom." And your dog will better recognize and love his new bedroom after he is all tired out and ready for bed!

In this section, we're going to teach your fluffy friend how to chill out, take a nap, and feel at home in that crate of his!

Whether you're taking Fido on a long hike, going to the local dog park, or playing fetch in the backyard, it's very important that you set up your crate-training zone before you go.





Here's What You'll Need:

- ▶ Your crate all set-up and placed next to a chair for you
- ▶ Water bowl or dispenser in the crate
- ▶ A small bowl of food within the crate
- ▶ Bottle of water, a snack, and a good book for you

It is so important to have everything set up before you go because upon arriving home after heavy exercise, your pup's first thought will be finding water, food, and a cozy place to lie down - so make sure his Doggie bedroom aka your lightweight, small dog crate - is ready for him!

While we do like to transition away from using food within the crate, in order to have your dog in his most relaxed state - utilizing a small bowl of food can be a real benefit for the first few sessions of post-exercise chillout.

Arriving Home

Upon arriving home, your routine might be to let your pup off his leash in the doorway, but today you want to walk him right into his crate, take off his leash, and point to his food and water if he hasn't already spotted it - acting all the while like nothing has changed.

By doing this, we're making the most of his fatigue and combining this with the comfort of food - a combination that we all know can lead to nap time!

Top Tip - Make sure he relieves himself before arriving home, otherwise you're going to sabotage your own training session!



Settle Into the Folding Dog Crate

While your pup is still eating his food, you want to sit down in the chair beside him, pick up your book, or magazine and start reading. The aim of the game is to show yourself being in an incredibly relaxed, calm, and quiet state to encourage him to do the same.

Avoiding too much stimuli at this stage, such as the television, radio, or music, will help your pup stay in that relaxed state of mind.



Whining and Whimpering

Each dog is unique, and while some may fall asleep right away, others may start to make a fuss, whimpering and whining to be let out.

Nobody enjoys it when this happens, and we know just how heart-wrenching it can be to hear. But stand your ground, my crate-training friend, because this is something that will easily be taught away with consistent training.

Time to Come Out

It's important that you build up the time that your dog is left in his crate post-exercise. Start with twenty minutes and build from there. A good idea is to set a very quiet alarm or timer on your phone so that you know exactly when the time is up!

If your dog is behaving well and lying quietly in his crate, you can calmly get up, unlatch the crate, and leave the door open, before returning to your previous seat for another few minutes of reading.

The reason that we go back to reading again is to show that coming out of the crate is not an overly exciting event, and therefore one that your pup should stay calm for.

You're more than welcome to praise him, of course, but we don't want to jump up and down.

Top Tip - If your dog is whining or barking when he is due to be let out, you must wait it out, and only open the crate door when there is a gap in his fussing.



chapter nine

Home Alone

We don't want little Fido to think that he made his family disappear, so the first few times you leave the home, you're not actually going to leave the property! Sneaky trick, right?

By this stage, you should have a relatively well-behaved puppy who will not only go into the crate on command but will also eat his food in there and hang out with the door closed while you're at home.

It doesn't matter whether you have a Pomeranian carrier, a mid-century modern dog house, or even a Louis Vuitton dog carrier for that matter, the principles of teaching your dog to be comfortable at home alone remain the same!

Now, we're going to take up to the final level, being careful to go slowly, so that we don't set off any separation anxiety.



STEP ONE - Going Outside

- ▶ Your dog should already be used to you going into the other room while he has a post-exercise nap in his cozy crate, but now it's time to leave the house altogether.
- ▶ When your dog is relaxed in the crate, you should leave the house and close the door behind you - but don't go far, the entranceway will do!
- ▶ Wait for about twenty seconds, and if your dog is quiet - you can return. If your dog does make a fuss and begin barking or whining, you want to wait on the other side of the door for a gap in their fuss before re-entering the home. Otherwise, your dog will learn to make a fuss when he wants you to return.
- ▶ Make sure not to make a big deal about this at all, even if your dog has stood up in his crate, and became excitable.
- ▶ Continue this exercise a few times until your dog couldn't care less!



STEP TWO - Out the Front Door

- ▶ Most dogs will associate being left home alone with you exiting through a certain door - usually the front door. We're going to use this exercise to show them that we don't always leave them for an entire workday, and it's not a big deal anyway!
- ▶ Start as the exercise above, with your dog in a relaxed state, preferably post exercise.
- ▶ In whatever clothes you happen to be wearing (without grabbing your coat as we don't want to signal to your dog that you're leaving the home as you would if leaving for an extended period), you're going to exit the home.
- ▶ After around one minute (provided your dog isn't barking - as then you'll have to wait for a gap in the barking) - you can re-enter.
- ▶ If your dog happens to be a barker, you will need to really focus on your patience for the first few sessions, you could be stood outside for a little while before he quietens down so that you can re-enter.
- ▶ Upon coming back inside don't talk to your dog, just sit down, drink your coffee, and go about your business. The whole goal of this exercise is to show it's not a big deal, both when you leave and when you return.

STEP THREE - Collect Your Belongings

This one sounds pretty simple, but can be the one that many dogs falter at.

- ▶ Complete step two, but rather than going out as you are, you're going to collect up your bag, your keys, and your jacket, to mimic yourself leaving the home fully as close as possible. For dogs that suffer from separation anxiety, this can trigger a negative response; but hopefully, if we've taken the training steps slowly enough - they should have little to no issue.
- ▶ If your dog really struggles with separation anxiety and truly hates when you leave the home, only leave the home for one minute before returning. We don't want to push him too far, it's all about going at your dog's pace.
- ▶ Gradually increase the time you are away from the house, starting with waiting outside for only a few minutes and working up to short errands and longer excursions.

Top Tip - If your dog immediately begins barking, you want to wait for a gap in the noise before returning into the home - and just like in step two, you are not going to acknowledge him in any way.

When you arrive home from an extended period away from the home, it's important that you immediately let your dog out to relieve himself and calm down from the excitement - give him a calm pat, and tell him what a good boy he is. You've both come a long way, and you both deserve it!

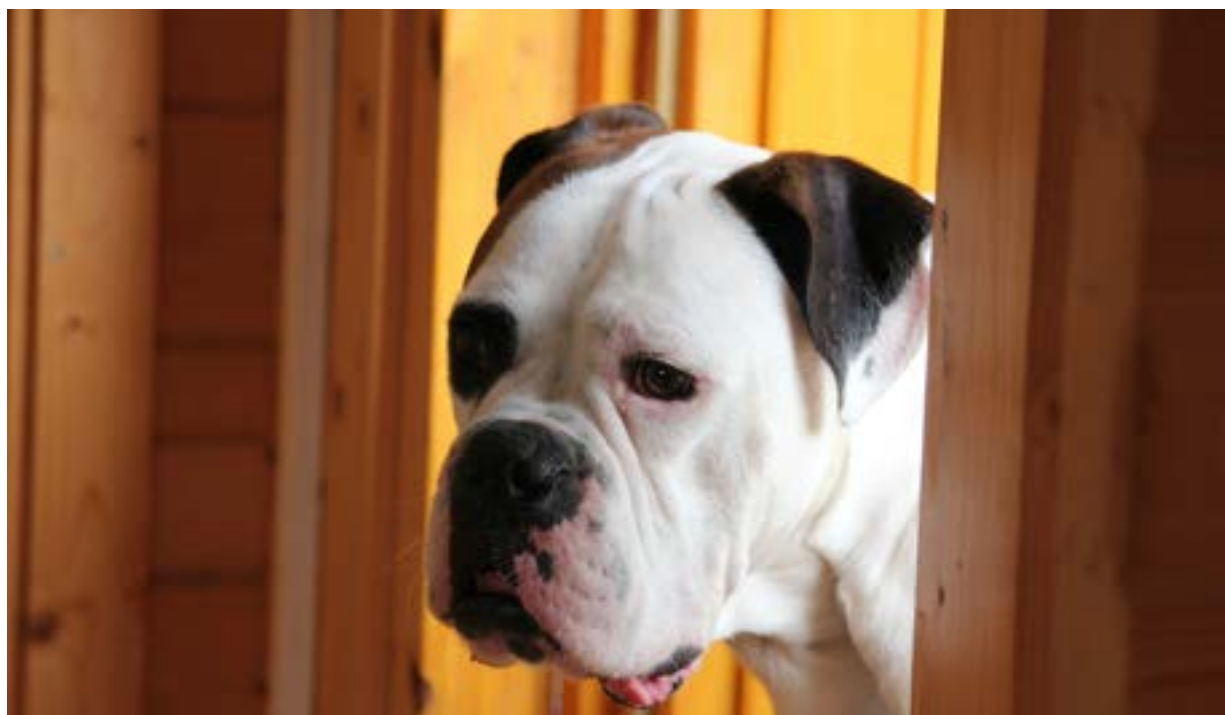


chapter ten

Leaving the Door Open

Now that your dog has gone through the step by step training required to be comfortable with the crate, from first introductions to staying home alone, you can now allow them to use the crate as and when they want throughout the day.

Buying a crate that has a door that will stay in a fixed open position is ideal for your dog's comfort, and has the added benefit that they will be able to come and go as they please.

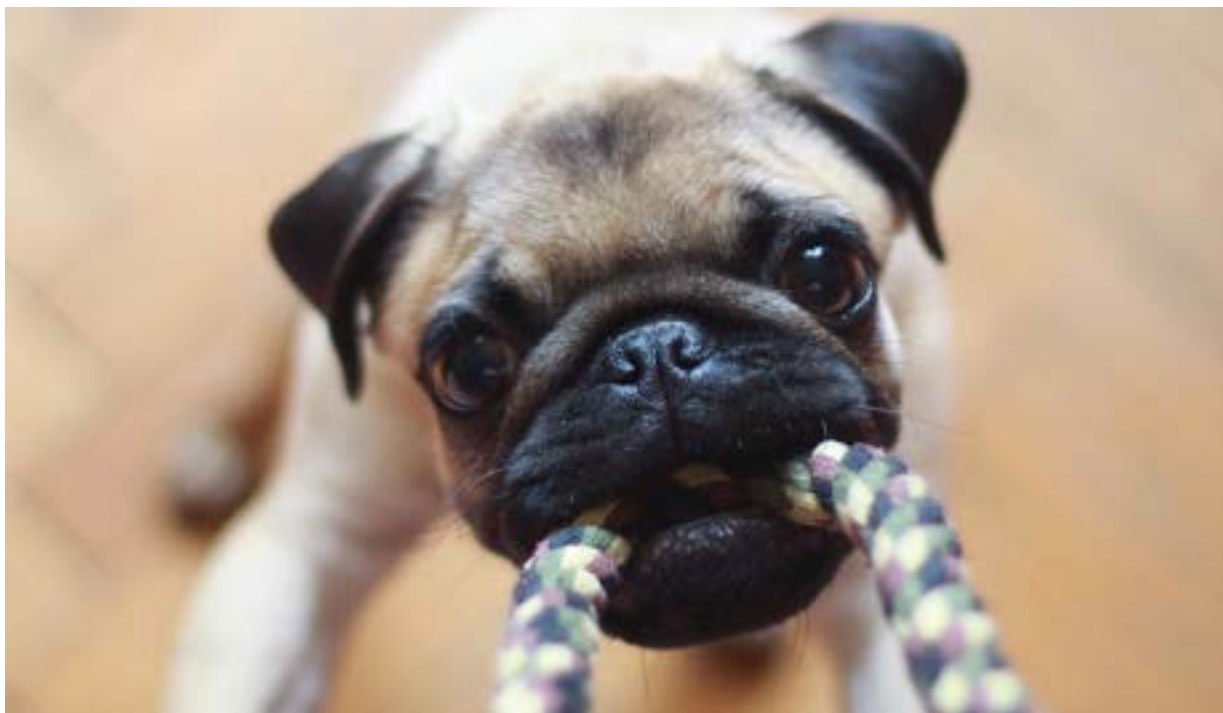


If your dog does great in his training sessions but doesn't seem keen to take up residence in his crate when given the choice - don't rush him.

There are a few tricks to entice him into his crate, but the most important thing to remember is that you should be going at his pace, and never force him into the crate as this can put him off entirely.

Favorite Toy

If Fido has a favorite toy, why not pop it in the crate every time you see it laying around?! This will help him to associate the crate with positive feelings.



Cozy Cushion

Just like people, some dogs simply don't like change. And to him, it might not seem as cozy as his regular spot beside the kitchen table! Well, here's a great tip to have him wanting to go into his doggie bedroom.

For dogs that are really wary of using the crate on their own time, you'll want to start by moving the crate to beside his current dog bed zone.

After a couple of days, you can put his dog bed inside of the crate, and hopefully - he'll wander in on his own. If this isn't the case, slowly putting the bed into the entrance of the crate - and gradually moving it back as days go by can be a good fix!



Treat Time

Have your dog raring to go into his crate by hiding treats in there for him to find. It's usually better to hide the treats in there rather than throwing them in for him, as throwing them encourages a high-energy response, i.e. jumping into the crate!





Walkies!

Not all dogs are ruled by their bellies, but pretty much all dogs love going for walkies! So, for the exercise addict, a good exercise is to ask him to go into his crate and lay down.

Once he has done this, you are going to want to clip his lead on, tell him what a good boy he is, and call him out of the crate - once he has exited the crate, we're going to say "walkies" and hit the trail!

As with all of the tips we've given above, this helps the canine to associate the crate with positive experiences and thus encourages them to repeat the behavior -- of stepping into the crate -- in the hopes of getting the same reward or positive experience.

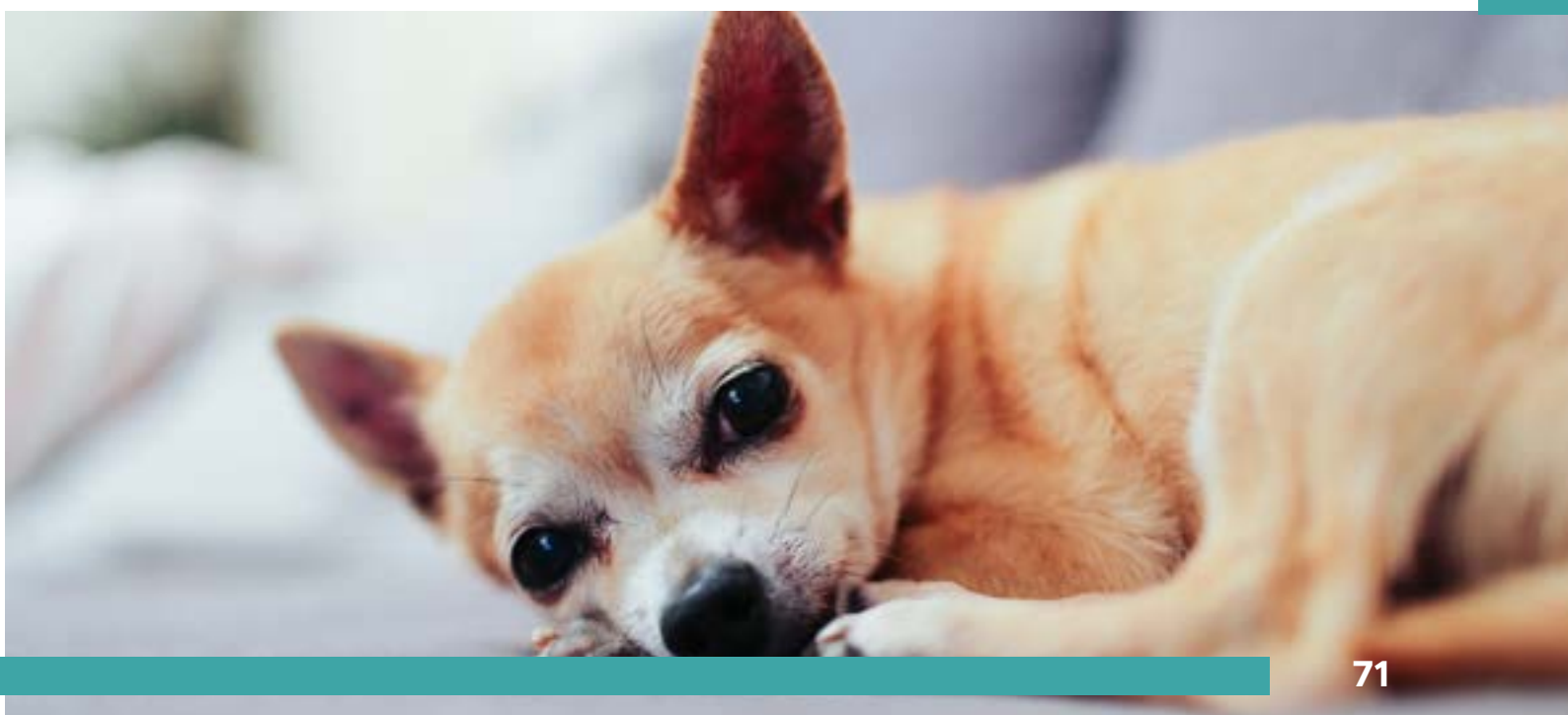
chapter eleven

Separation Anxiety

The most common mistake that dog owners make is rushing the process of leaving their dogs alone in a crate.

We get it, you've got to rush out to dinner, or to work, or any of the other zillion places you have to be, and rather than risk coming back to a scene of torn-up couches and chewed on shoes, you just pop Fido in his crate and head on out.

But, as you're rushing around picking up your bag, your keys, and your water bottle, your little pup is fully aware that he's about to be ditched - and this works him up to a high energy, anxious state.



Separation anxiety is no laughing matter, and for a pack animal - can be extremely distressing if they aren't fully aware of what is happening. In your dog's mind, you leaving him alone can signal that you're never to return, while dog owners joke about dogs reacting to their swift return as though they were gone for years - for your dog, he can truly feel abandoned.



The most common signs of separation anxiety include:

- ▶ Barking
- ▶ Howling
- ▶ Whining
- ▶ Destructive behavior
- ▶ Pacing
- ▶ Little 'accidents' even when housetrained
- ▶ Excessive panting or drooling

What Kind of Crate?

There are numerous crate styles on the market, but some features are more suited, and some less suited, to dogs with separation anxiety. It does, of course, depend on the size of your pooch, after all - you could buy the best crate for small dogs, or top dog crate for puppies - but if you own a Great Dane; that's not going to work!

For those that love travel, hitting the open road can be a nightmare if you don't take travel into consideration before making your crate purchase. Opting for a collapsible travel dog crate can make your family travels a breeze, well - we can't guarantee the kids will behave themselves, but your dog should be comfortable!



Likewise, if you travel overseas often, small breed owners whose dogs are small enough to travel in the cabin might want to opt for a Pomeranian carrier, or similar. Whereas owners of larger pooches that are required to travel in the hold will need to buy one of the strongest dog crates that meets airline requirements.

The material you choose is also very important. While many dog owners opt for an entirely metal crate due to its durability, there are many wire crates that suffer from sharp edges that can cause injury to escape artists or teething puppies.

Hard crates with enclosed edging can offer the best of both worlds, with superior strength which suits rambunctious puppies, and those suffering from anxiety -- thanks to the quietness of the material when pushed against -- without the risk of your beloved pet injuring themselves.

Another really important consideration if you're buying a crate for your new puppy, is that they're going to grow up pretty fast!

Buying a crate that's too small will mean having to replace it really soon, but on the other hand - buying one that is too big can encourage going potty in the crate - which is a tricky behavior to teach them to stop.



Some awesome crates offer a middle partition which is perfect for the growing pup - just slide the partition into place while your pooch is small, and once he gets a bit bigger - you can take that partition away and give him run of the entire crate.

- ▶ Bright and Airy - if your dog is suffering from anxiety, having an open-walled crate can help them to feel much more comfortable in their surroundings as they're able to see what is happening around them.
- ▶ Paw and Nose Safe - Fido may try and find his way out, and getting his nose or paws trapped on a sharp or badly put together crate is going to make the situation much worse.
- ▶ Multi-door Crates - crates with more than one opening make initial training less intimidating. Ideally, you'll want to find a crate with at least two openings.



Two Training Tips for Anxious Canines

So what's our solution here? It's pretty simple actually. We want to make sure that Fido is calm and comfortable. And in order to best do this, we need to work on a couple of exercises before we even begin working with the crate.

Step One - Stay Put

If your dog tends to follow you from room to room in the house, that's a sign of severe separation anxiety.

We can turn this anxiety into calm anticipation of reward quite simply by utilizing the "stay" command.

- ▶ Our first step is showing him that we have treats - this helps to focus his attention.
- ▶ Now, we're going to ask him to sit, and stay.
- ▶ Now we turn our back on him and walk one step away, then turn back around, walk over to him, give him a treat and tell him he's a good boy.

Top Tip - Never throw the treat to him, as this will encourage him to start jumping around, working himself into a high-energy state.

Step Two - Relaxation Time

With step one, you were learning to have better communication and control, and now we expand on that.

Essentially, we will be showing the dog that even though he's in the crate, it doesn't mean that he will be left alone.

- ▶ Start out with the crate door open, and no food within the crate. During an anxiety attack, your dog can become so worked up that he runs a much higher risk of choking.
- ▶ We're going to place a leash on the dog and walk him towards the crate.
- ▶ Before we get to the crate, we're going to ask him to sit, and then we wait for him to relax.
- ▶ Using the leash, guide the dog into the crate, and discourage him from exiting by using a "chh chh" noise, or merely holding your hand up and saying "ah ah".

- ▶ Now we just stand patiently until he shows calm behavior - ideally laying down.
- ▶ Once he lays down, we're going to step further away from the crate -- still within view -- and take a seat nearby.
- ▶ If he tries to get up to follow, we're again going to use our "chh chh" or "ah ah" noise.
- ▶ From the seat, we're going to again wait for him to become very calm, and perhaps even fall asleep!

Rewarding this behavior afterward should be done calmly with a treat, and not result in excitement, or high energy behavior.

Once you have completed these steps, you should be able to follow our previous chapters to teach your dog to accept you leaving them alone in the crate, and ultimately leaving them home alone.

But remember, for an anxious dog, this can take more time and requires great patience.



chapter eleven

Crate Training an Older Dog

If you're the proud owner of an older canine, or about to welcome one into your home - there are definite differences when it comes to training an older dog compared to a puppy.

When first introducing the crate, be sure to have the crate in a welcoming place, not in the center of activity, but equally not hidden away from all activity - as he may get lonely.

As he's an older guy, it's also worth being aware that cold-weather drafts may affect him more than his more youthful counterpart, and position the crate accordingly.



Things to put in the Crate

- ▶ **Comfy cushions or blankets** - let the old guy have somewhere soft to lie down, make it appealing to him but not difficult for him to step onto.
- ▶ **Toys** - especially food-filled toys that will entice him to enter the crate
- ▶ **Chews** - large chews that cannot be swallowed are preferable

Rewards

Food-Based Rewards

- ▶ Entice your new dog to enter his crate is with food. Give your dog his meals inside of the crate.
- ▶ If he feels too intimidated to enter the crate then move his bowl to just outside of the door. Gradually move the bowl further and further into the crate until he is comfortable entering the crate.
- ▶ Don't forget, you can split your dog's daily portion into lots of small meals to give you more opportunities to practice.

Toy-Based Rewards

- ▶ Dogs love to chew on toys, and food-filled toys are a particular favorite.
- ▶ Try to have a variety of toys available for your dog so that he is constantly stimulated with new shapes, textures, and types.

Praise-Based Rewards

- ▶ The easiest and most cost-effective way of training your dog is to reward with praise. Your voice is, of course, one of the nicest sounds to your dog.
- ▶ Raising the pitch of your voice when praising the desired action is a very useful training tool.





Closing the Door on the Older Dog

Once you have your dog voluntarily entering the crate for a reward, the next step is to be able to close the dog in the crate. Try not to rush the process of gaining your older dog's trust in the crate, a steady progression now will avoid trouble later.

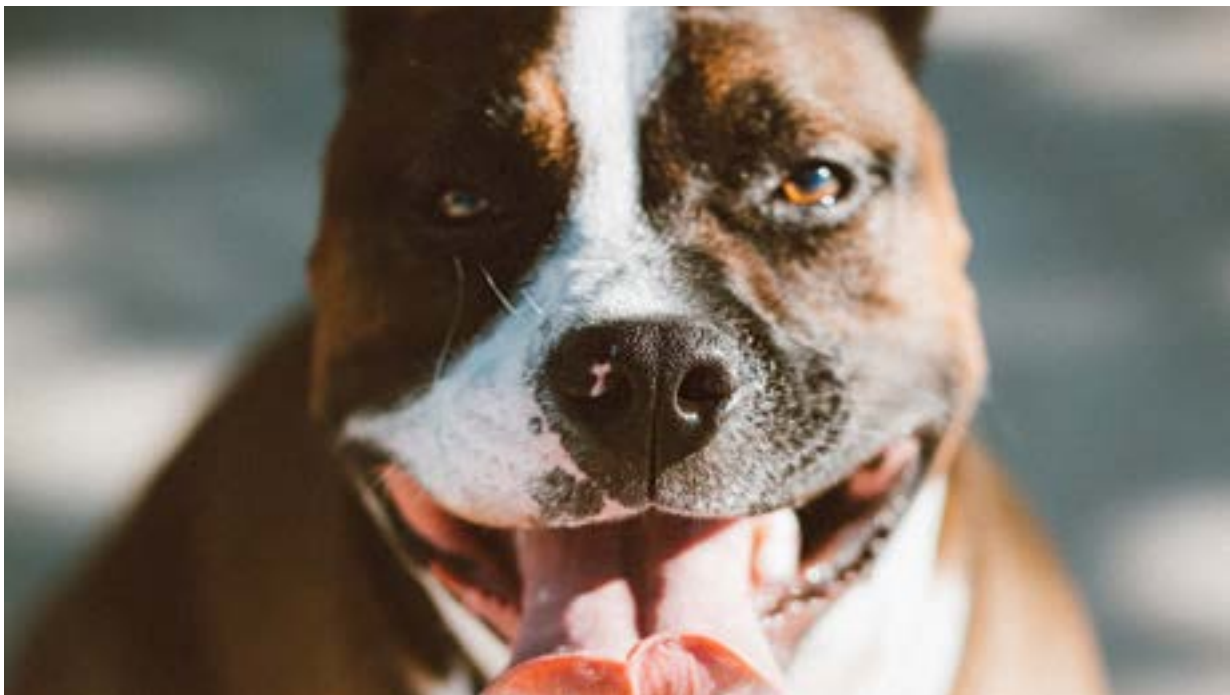
An older dog is more set in his ways, cynical of new things, and cautious than a bouncing puppy - so be considerate of the fact that training may well take longer in the beginning, but my goodness, the joys of owning an older pooch far outweigh any additional work!

Rewarding the Older Dog When You Return

The older dog is usually slightly different from the younger dog when you return home. The older dog doesn't get as excited and of course, he usually, has a larger bladder, so you might not need to rush him straight out.

Making a gentle fuss of your dog when you return home is a pleasant experience for both of you.

Now might be the time to take him for a walk or at least let him out in the yard. A snack can also be served if that is part of his routine.





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