



Dog Training & Behavior Services

Courtesy of: Heather Hime

Owner of Lucky Paws LLC

Heather@lucky pawsmn.com

612-388-9656



Crate Training: Why and How you Should Do It

#1: The number one reason I recommend crate training your dog is for safety reasons. Traveling in a crate is the safest way you can transport your pet in the car, the crate keeps them out of potentially dangerous things they may find or destroy in your home.

#2: It will help to minimize stress when your dog needs to visit the vet or groomer for the day and spend time crated. It also helps with housetraining.

#3: The third reason I recommend it is that if training is done properly, your dog will LOVE it's crate! It will be a safe, comfortable and fun place to be. Not only that, but it will make traveling with your pup much easier as well!

Choosing a Crate - For puppies, wire crates with dividers are a great idea. This gives you the ability to buy a large crate and make it much smaller for your young puppy. Puppies should only be given enough room to stand up and turn around comfortably. This will prevent them from potting in their crate. You may choose to put bedding in the crate, however some dogs will destroy bedding so proceed with caution.

Weekend Crate Training Plan:

Preparation: Prepare lots of high value treats (cut up into pea size pieces or smaller for smaller dogs), make up a few stuffed kongs and freeze them and/or a few treat dispensing toys or bones.

The higher value of the treat (chicken, cheese, hot dogs, freeze dried liver) the faster your dog will learn.

SATURDAY:

Step 1: Show your dog the yummy treat and toss it into the back of the crate while saying your command "go to your crate." You may certainly use a different

command if you choose. When your dog goes in to get the treat, give it another treat while they are still in the crate, then say "Ok" releasing the dog to come out of the crate. Do not reward for coming out of the crate. Good things should happen only while they are in the crate. Repeat 10 times, then take a few minutes for a break. Come back and do another 10 repetitions.

Step 2: A little while later, grab those high value treats again and walk over to the crate. Ask your dog to enter the crate without first tossing a treat in (you may need to warm up with step 1 a few times prior to starting this). When your dog enters the crate without tossing a treat in, praise and feed several treats while your dog stays in the treat. Say "Ok" to release them. Repeat 10 times, break for a few minutes, and repeat another 10 times. If your dog is nervous or cautious, go back to step 1 for a little while. Once your dog is rushing in doing step 1, you can move to step 2.

Step 3: Later that day, you will begin working on closing the door. Warm up with a few repetitions from step 2. Send your dog into the crate as in step 2 and gently close the door. Feed several treats through the door, then release "Ok" and open the door. Repeat 10 times, break, then move on to step 4.

Step 4: We will now begin slowly increasing duration. Follow directions in step 3 while beginning to increase the amount of time the door is closed. Randomize how long you leave the door shut. Ex. 3 seconds, 10 seconds, 7 seconds, 15 seconds. Do 10-15 repetitions rewarding generously

while your dog is in the crate, then break for at least 30 minutes. Practice throughout the evening working up to leaving your dog in the crate for 1 minute and begin adding distance from your dog as well. You can walk away and return to your dog to treat every few seconds, varying how often you return.

SUNDAY:

Step 1: Send your dog into their crate and

give them a special bone or stuffed Kong hat will last them a while. Now occupy yourself with TV or a book in the same room. Leave your dog in the crate for 30 minutes. If they finish they special treat, periodically toss them treats as long as they remain quiet. After 30 minutes, say "Ok" and release your dog. Take away their special bone/chew, and do not give them treats or excited praise. The fun only happens in the crate.

Step 2: Exercise your dog, then repeat step 1, but instead leave the dog in a different room in the crate for 10 minutes. Take a break & repeat.

Step 3: Repeat step 2, but actually leave the house for 10 minutes. Take a break and repeat several times over the evening, gradually increasing the amount of time you are gone up to an hour or two.

Continue to increase the amount of time your dog is in the crate. A general rule is 1 hour per month of age, so a 3 month old puppy would last 3 hours.

Trainer Tips:

- If at any time your dog seems stressed, slow down and go back to the previous step for a bit to build confidence. Older dogs, rescue dogs, and some puppies will need you to really take your time.

- Feed your dog in their crate

- When your dog is not looking, put something tasty in the treat for them to find the surprise later (can also lock the dog out with the treat inside).

- If your dog complains (whining or barking) simply ignore them. Reward when quiet for 5-10 seconds.

- Youtube: "Zelda Crate Games"