

Crate Training

There is always much debate and speculation surrounding whether crates are a good thing or not, but this is usually due to our perception of them rather than our dogs. To us the idea of being shut in a 'cage' (as some people view it) reminds us of a prison and we do not want our dogs to think that we are locking them away. However, our dogs do not view crates in the same way, but instead they view them as a safe haven which they can retreat to whenever they need to. We all have a place somewhere in the house that we can retire to whenever we feel tired, stressed, or just need some time alone, and this is how dogs view their crates.

What Crate Should I Purchase?

There are a variety of crates available on the market ranging from wire framed crates to fabric crates, so there are options available depending on your taste.

The wire crates are much more secure compared to the fabric crates, and they are easier to clean if you plan to use the crate for a puppy. They are also more robust, as the fabric crates can be easily ripped by stronger dogs, so make sure you consider the options before committing to one. The downside to the wire crates is that they are heavier in weight compared to the fabric crates, which are really lightweight, and are useful crates to take with you if you go on holiday or to a dog show.

If you prefer the security of the wire crates but are put off by the appearance of them, have a shop around as there are now wire crates available that come with fabric covers.

How to Introduce the Crate:

-  Place the crate in your chosen area in the house (this needs to be an area where it will remain undisturbed, so do not place it in an area or in front of something that you require access to on a daily basis).
-  Place your dog's bed in the crate and close the door.
-  Drop some tasty treats (that your dog or puppy absolutely loves) through the opening in the crate so that your dog can see them but is unable to reach them (because the door is closed).
-  Wait for a few seconds and then open the door to the crate and allow your dog to run in and find all the tasty treats you just dropped inside (you will usually find that they are desperate to run inside once the door opens).



Continue to repeat this exercise.



Once your dog is comfortable running inside the crate to collect the tasty treats, you can then advance it by closing the door whilst your dog or puppy is inside and continue to drop tasty treats whilst they are inside the crate. This exercise continues to reinforce that the crate brings really positive experiences.

If done correctly it will not take long for your dog to adjust to their new bed, but make sure that you do not try to rush the process and allow them to explore and gain confidence with their new surroundings on a daily basis.

Things to Remember:

- Always ensure that you make the crate a positive experience for your dog and never shut your dog in the crate or send them to their crate when you are angry with them. A dogs crate should only be a positive place for them, and it should never be used as an area to punish your dog if they do something that you disapprove of.
- Do not say anything to your dog or make a big deal about the new item that has arrived. Instead, allow your dog to approach the crate and investigate it on their own accord.
- If your dog enters the crate do not shut the door behind them. Instead throw a tasty treat towards them as a reward and then allow them to continue to investigate. You may find that your dog decides to hang around the crate as they just received a tasty treat for being near it, so reward them again if they do.
- If your dog continues to hang around the crate then you can progress up a step and begin to gently throw some treats inside to encourage your dog to enter the crate to retrieve the treats. If they do this then continue to throw some treats inside the crate whilst they are inside.
- If you have a dog that is nervous of the crate then you can encourage them to approach it by placing their food bowl near the crate at meal times. If your dog is happy to eat the food near the crate then you can gradually begin to decrease the distance that the food bowl is away from the crate, until you are eventually feeding your dog inside the crate.

Fancy a Chat?

Us too! If you have any questions or would like some assistance with crate training then give us a call on 07538 032 508 or 07432 153 674. We are always here to help!