



## Crate Training Protocol

One of the most important things for your puppy to learn is to be comfortable, relaxed, and safe in his crate. Follow these steps to introduce your puppy to the crate and create a positive association with being alone. **It is very important to practice for at least one hour (two 30-minute sessions or an hour-long session) during the day. If the puppies are only used to going to their crates at night, they will begin to whine and bark for attention during the day.**

**A general rule is that puppies can stay in a crate for one hour per how many months old they are, plus one additional hour. For instance, if a puppy is two months old, they can be in the crate for three hours. If they are four months old, they can be in the crate for five hours. This does not apply as much to overnight crating, as the puppy will generally be asleep for most of that time. However, very young puppies may need to be taken outside during the night for a potty break.**

### Step 1

During this phase, the crate door always stays open.

- When your puppy isn't looking, toss a few tasty treats inside the crate to spark their investigation. Make sure to use something extra tasty that they only get during training time.
- Leave the crate door open and every time your puppy looks towards it, walks towards it, takes a step in, etc, give him a lot of treats and praise.
- Periodically leave extra special treats inside like a kong, bone, or toy.
- Feed them their dinner inside the crate. If they are too uncomfortable to go all the way inside at this point, try leaving it just inside by the door or even just outside the door.
- Over the next couple of days you will be rewarding your puppy for going towards and into the crate, make sure to have a bunch of training treats ready because you will be using them!

### Step 2

- The verbal cue you should introduce to your puppy is "Kennel." Start using the verbal cue once your puppy is going inside every time. If you add it in too early, they will get confused and not understand what you are asking.
- Start by either sitting on the floor or in a chair beside the crate. Show your puppy one of the treats and toss it in. Once he goes in to eat it, say "Kennel," give a lot of praise and feed them another treat while inside.
- The release cue you should use with your puppy is "All Done." This is used so the puppy knows they can come out again. Begin using this when she exits the crate. Don't reward when they leave the crate so they learn that good things happen when he is inside.



- REPEAT these steps about 10 times, take a short break, and then do another 10 reps. After you have finished the two, end the session.

### **Step 2.5 – to be done a few hours after Step 2**

- First, warm up with a few reps of tossing the treat in and using the verbal cue.
- Give your cue and point to the crate instead of tossing in the treat. If the puppy doesn't follow the cue, try pointing and tossing the treat at the same time.
- Once your puppy goes in, then give a lot of praise and treats while they are still inside.
- Use your release command for your puppy to come out.
- REPEAT these steps about 10 times, take a short break, and then do another 10 reps. After you have finished the two, end the session.

If your puppy isn't catching onto the cue or seems nervous, step back to tossing the treat in first and wait until he understands and feels more comfortable.

### **Step 3**

During this phase, you will start getting your puppy used to being in the crate with the door closed.

- First, warm up and do a few repetitions of the last step, remembering to release them every time.
- Do the same thing, reward the puppy for going in, and then gently close the door. Give him a few treats and praise with the door closed.
- Give your release cue, open the door, and let your puppy out
- If your puppy seems to be too nervous with the door closed all the way, break this down into two parts, start with the door halfway closed and then transition to fully closed.
- REPEAT these steps 10 times, take a short break, and then do another 10 reps. As you go through your repetitions, increase the time the door is closed. Do 1 second, then 5 seconds, then 8 seconds, then back to 5, then 10, then 8, and so on. Make sure to mix up the times.

### **Step 4**

Once your puppy is comfortable being in the crate with the door closed you are going to start getting them ready for alone time.

- First, warm up with a few repetitions from the last step, but each time start to slowly move away and then back to the crate.
- Release your puppy, go through the same steps, once the crate door is closed, treat.



- Now, with the door still closed, stand up, treat, take a few steps away, then go back and treat again.
- Open the door and release your puppy.
- REPEAT these steps 10 times, each time walking in a different direction. After a short break, start again increasing the time your puppy is left alone in the crate. Do 5 seconds, then 10, then 8, 15, and so on. Be generous, give a lot of treats for now, and as your puppy gets more comfortable being in the crate, you can gradually start giving less.
- After these repetitions, take about a half hour to an hour break, and repeat the steps again. Start leaving the room, only for a second, and then releasing your puppy. Gradually build up the time as we did before, try to get to them being in the crate for 1 minute while you walk around the room, briefly leave, and come back. REMEMBER if you go through the steps too quickly, you will have to step back or even start over.

## Step 5

Now you will be working on getting your puppy comfortable with longer periods in the crate. Grab your treats, and a Kong stuffed with something delicious, as well as something to occupy yourself.

- Ask your puppy to go in the crate and close them in with the Kong. Get yourself comfortable watching TV, reading a book, or whatever you choose to do in that room. Leave them in there for about 30 minutes.
- If your puppy finishes the Kong or bone, you can continue to give them a few treats here and there as long as they are staying quiet.
- After the half hour is up, release your puppy and take away the Kong. DO NOT give them any treats when they come out or make a big deal out of it. You want them to learn that good things happen while they are inside the crate, not when they are released.

At this time, your puppy may start to whine, or bark while being left alone inside. My suggestion here is to ignore them completely. If you release them, or treat them for this behavior, they are learning that if they make noise, they will get your attention. Once they have stopped, then reward them with a few treats. This step can be frustrating in some cases, but if you are consistent, your puppy will learn that it is in their best interest to be quiet and relax.

## Step 6

Now it is time to give your puppy some alone time in the crate. Make sure to exercise your puppy before this step, take him to the park, for a walk or run, play fetch, and also do some basic obedience training.

- Ask your puppy to go into the crate. Give them a Kong and leave the room.



- Stay out of the room for 10 minutes, then return and release them. If they haven't finished the Kong, take it away (they only get this treat while in the crate). If your puppy is making noise, don't return until they have stopped for 5-10 seconds.
- REPEAT the exercise, after a short break.

### **Step 7**

If your puppy can calmly stay in the crate for an hour while you work around the house, it is time to try leaving completely.

- Ask your puppy to go in their crate and give them the Kong.
- Without saying any goodbyes, leave the room and house for 10 minutes.
- When you return, calmly let your puppy out of the crate and take away the Kong.
- REMEMBER your puppy will feel more comfortable going in and out of the crate if it seems like no big deal. Don't give any indication that you are leaving or be overly excited when you return home.
- REPEAT this exercise as often as possible before going to bed with bathroom breaks and exercise between. Gradually increase each time you are out of the house until you get to about an hour or even longer.