



# SIT HAPPENS DOG TRAINING

LIVE BEYOND THE LEASH

## CRATE TRAINING: 101

**Crate** training may be one of the most important and overlooked aspects of dog training. When properly done it can provide a quiet, safe environment that becomes our dog's special place to retreat and unwind. The crate helps our dogs understand that we can take care of ourselves and they don't need to watch over every move we make. It provides much needed clarity when potty training. When leaving them home unattended, it protects them from injury while protecting our things from destruction. It relieves separation anxiety. The crate allows us to passively show, that even though we aren't dogs, we can protect them and they can trust us to be their leaders. These are the basic steps to properly crate train. They are age-dependent as well as training-dependent. The process may vary based on problems that may already exist. When choosing a crate we prefer the enclosed plastic crates with a wire mesh door. The crate should be large enough for the dog to stand up, turn around, lie down and fully extend their legs. Try to start crate training when you have a few days off consecutively. A weekend for example.

### *Step #1 Crate Introduction*

Initially place the crate in the family room of your home. We don't want to separate the dog from their family at first. Allow the dog to investigate the crate on his own. Grab a high quality treat and place a few pieces just inside the lip of the crate. Let your dog reach in and eat them. Repeat this step until your dog appears comfortable taking the food. Now place the food farther inside the crate. About half way between the front and the back. Let your dog go in and take the food. Repeat several times. Finally, place the food inside towards the back of the crate. Let your dog go in and take the treat. Repeat until your dog appears comfortable. Now place a treat towards the back of the crate. Check the time. When your dog goes in to get it, gently close the door. Sit near the crate. Allow your dog to problem solve his situation. During this time, he may whine, cry, bark and bounce around the crate. Avoid comforting him or even talking to him. When he has been in the crate for 15 minutes, open the door and let him out. Try putting him in the crate for 15 minutes of every hour using the process described. On the third attempt label the process with a command word, like: load up, crate, go home or whatever word or phrase you would like to use to tell him to get in the crate. Try to stay neutral during the process. Your dog can tell when you are upset.

### *Step #2 Relocation*

The goal is to be able to slowly relocate the crate to your desired location in the house. When choosing this location, try to pick a quiet room away from the main traffic area of the house. A spare bedroom or office usually works best. Avoid putting it against a window or on an A/C register. If near a window, close the blinds when he is in the crate. Unlike humans, our dogs don't care about the view. This is a progressive process. We are just repeating the main steps from crate introduction in new areas around the house. Once your dog will go in the crate and lie down, it's time to relocate it to a nearby hallway. Try to give the dog an obstructed view of you and the family. While saying your command word, continue to use food to lure your dog into the crate. When your dog is comfortable and relaxes quickly in the crate ... It's time to move the crate to its final safe area out of sight. Load your dog in the crate. Don't say goodbye. Don't say I love you (out loud). Just walk away like you believe in what you are doing. If all went as planned, you have given your dog the greatest gift, security. Get in the habit of randomly putting your dog in the crate while you're home. This will help him understand that you tell him what to do and where to go whether you're home, or not. Put him away 15 minutes before you leave the house. Putting on your shoes and grabbing your keys can trigger anxiety. Remember, all training should be fun and help your dog understand he can trust you. *If other problems arise or for special circumstances, call Sit Happens today.*



FOR A **FREE** IN-HOME CONSULTATION PLEASE CONTACT US:

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