

The Path to Success – Crate Training

Watch for signs of stress.

How will you know your dog is stressed? Canine communication is very clear: Panting, sweating paws, drooling, trembling, vocalizing, panicked scratching at the crate door, spinning in circles, are all signs of separation anxiety and is not yet ready to be confined or to be left alone in a crate. Please consult with your trainer if you see any of these signs.

If your dog is simply barking or whining in the crate, do not yell at him or bang on the crate, as this will cause his anxiety to increase and his trust in you to decrease. Wait for a quiet moment and let him out---then work on shorter periods of confinement and “alone time”, by releasing him before he escalates into the barking and whining.

What is the best way to acclimate him? Play the crate game.

Set the crate up in a quiet but not isolated area. This game may take a few minutes or need to be played over a period of days.

1. Toss some delicious treats in the crate, step back, and allow your dog to walk in and eat them.
2. If your dog is hesitant to enter, keep the treats near the front so he can simply reach in with his head, then gradually move them deeper into the crate. Do 3---4 repetitions at a time. Give a few minutes break and repeat the session. **DO NOT CLOSE THE DOOR**
3. After he is happily walking in and looking for the treats, close the door briefly, add a few more treats and let him out while he is still eating.
4. If he seems comfortable with the door closed, add a little time and distance (where you move away from the crate and then into another room). If he becomes stressed you are proceeding too fast.
5. Continue acclimating in short training sessions, slowly increasing the time he is left alone. Add a stuffed Kong or a special chew stick to keep him busy and happy while he is alone.
6. You are on the right track when your dog, on his own, chooses to enter and happily lie down in his crate.