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Crate Training and Housetraining Guidelines

While many adult dogs have had experience in crating and housetraining, it is best to start from the beginning when bringing a new dog home. Adult dogs need time to adapt to new bathroom and feeding schedules while adjusting to their environment.

Using crates can help manage your dog's behavior and set them up for success. The initial structure will ensure more freedom as your dog adjusts.

Why is crate training beneficial?

- A crate provides a safe, comfortable place for your dog to relax.
- Crating your dog when left unattended can prevent and manage destructive behaviors.
- Crate trained dogs make house-training much easier and more successful as dogs do not like to use the bathroom where they eat and sleep.
- Dogs who are crate trained will feel much more relaxed and stress-free if you need to crate them for emergencies, such as emergency vet visits or during an evacuation.
- Crating can help manage your dog as guests arrive to your home and can provide your dog a break while guests are visiting.
- Crating is a safe way to manage a multi-dog household.

Tips on introducing a crate and making crate time as enjoyable as possible for your dogs:

- Never force your dog into the crate. Use high value treats or toys to encourage your dog to enter the crate.
- Open the doors to the crate and allow your dog to go in and out on their own.
- The crate should be the proper size. It should be large enough for your dog to stand up and turn around in. This creates a secure but comfortable area.
- There are different crate types, but the most common are airline and wire.
- Make the crate as comfortable as possible: cover over top, crate pad, blanket, etc.
- Always exercise before crating. A tired dog is more apt to relax and sleep well.
- Mental exercise is just as important (if not more important) as physical exercise. Enrichment can help curb boredom and stress. [Click here for more information on appropriate enrichment items \(insert website link here\).](#)
- Begin feeding all meals in the crate. Meals and enrichment provided in the crate will help your dog associate the crate with positive things.
- Build drive/desire to be in the crate by putting high value treats (your dog's favorite treat or toy) inside and shutting the door. Wait for your dog to paw at the door to get in. If you have a multi-dog household, do this exercise with dogs kept separate to avoid any conflict.
- Leave on the radio or TV. Soothing sounds, such as classical music, can help ease anxiety when home alone.



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- Include items of clothing with your scent to comfort your dog.
- Keep your dog's crate in a room that you use frequently, such as the corner of the living room.
- Do not only crate when leaving. You want to avoid your dog associating the crate only with you leaving.

If your dog shows signs of moderate to severe separation anxiety when crated or left unattended, it is best to consult with a professional. Symptoms may include causing harm to oneself, destructive behavior, excessive drooling and more. Click here for more information on separation anxiety (insert website link here). Please contact our behavior department for recommendations.

Housetraining Help:

Also referred to as “housebreaking”, housetraining helps your dog understand that he or she is to use the bathroom outdoors.

Tips:

- When initially coming home, offer frequent bathroom breaks.
- Do not give too much freedom too soon. A dog who has full access to a new home will probably have more accidents than a dog that you give supervised access.
- If you need to leave your dog unattended, try a crate.
- Reward when your dog goes to the bathroom outside!
- Be consistent. Keeping the same feeding and bathroom schedule makes for successful results.

What happens if she has an accident?

- If your dog has an accident in front of you, take him outside immediately. Praise him once he goes outside.
- Do not punish your dog under any circumstances. This can cause your dog to be fearful of using the bathroom around you.
- If your dog has frequent accidents, modify the crating schedule and always eliminate health issues that could contribute.
- Thoroughly clean the area with an enzyme based cleaner. Dogs are attracted to the scent of a soiled area, so the odor must be eliminated.

For more help and support, reach out to our team at behavior@jaxhumane.org or call 904.493.4586.