



## Guide to Crate Training

Crate training can be hugely beneficial to both you and your dog! When you are not home, keeping your dog in a crate will keep him out of trouble by preventing him from having accidents in the home or engaging in destructive chewing. Don't worry, most dogs learn to love their crates!

*Here are some tips to help your dog learn that the crate is a great place to be.*

1. **Teach your dog to go into the crate.** DO NOT FORCE YOUR DOG INTO THE CRATE. Instead, toss a treat in the crate. Even if he just stick his nose in, great! Keep tossing treats further into the crate until your dog walks in all the way.
2. Once your dog is confidently walking into the crate, begin tossing in tons of tiny treats. Toss them in one after the other, rapid fire! Your dog will quickly learn that the crate is a great place to be.
3. By now your dog should be excited for the chance to go into the crate. At this point you can give treats more slowly, only dropping in a few when he goes into the crate.
4. **You can now begin to close the door of the crate.** Close the door several inches and toss treats in the kennel rapid fire. Open the door and stop tossing treats. Close the door a little more and give rapid fire treats again. Continue until you can close the door all the way. This will teach your dog that treats come when the door is closed.
5. **Now it's time to add duration to the crate.** Find a puzzle toy or rawhide. Wait for your dog to go in the crate, and then offer puzzle toy. Walk several paces from the crate and then return. Your dog should still be engaged in the chew toy. Upon your return, trade him for the toy (do NOT just take the toy). Your dog will actually be disappointed that you returned. Continue this process until you can leave the room for several minutes with a calm, relaxed dog in the crate.

*Guidelines for using the crate:*

1. Your dog's crate should be large enough for him to be able to stand up and turn in a complete circle. The crate should not be much larger than this. (Crates that are too large give your dog the chance to potty in one corner and sleep in the other.)
2. Your dog should always have access to water. Be sure to keep a bowl with water in the crate.
3. An adult dog can stay in the crate for up to eight hours in a day. However, a dog that is crated needs plenty of physical exercise to keep them healthy. If possible, try to only crate your dog for about 5 hours at a time.
4. Puppies cannot spend this much time in a crate. Follow this formula for a rule-of-thumb: [puppy's age in months + 1 = number of hours he can stay in a crate]
5. Keep the crate in a quiet place. Do NOT place the crate near a window (watching animals, dogs, and people go by can be very frustrating for a dog). Use a plastic crate or wire crate with a blanket/ sheet draped over the top.

If you have tried what is provided here and still have questions, contact [larimerbehaviorhelp@nocohumane.org](mailto:larimerbehaviorhelp@nocohumane.org) or call 970-226-3647 ext. 5130