

## Dog Cages and Crates: Training Your Pet for the Crate

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*



### CRATE TRAINING: beneficial at any age

Crate training can be a very positive thing for both dogs and owners. If the crate is properly introduced and used, the dog comes to see it as his 'den'; a secure, relaxing space of his own. Even if you have an older dog, crate training is possible and worthwhile.

The key to crate training, for a dog of any age, is to make the [crate](#) an appealing place. Never ever use it for punishment.

To begin, set the crate up with the door open. Make sure the door cannot swing closed on the dog while his head is in the crate. This could startle him and make him afraid of the crate. Tie the door open if you need to. Then, go about your regular routine and every so often, throw a [treat](#) into the crate for your dog. Start with the treats near the opening of the crate, then move them farther inside each time. Or, get out a [toy](#) your dog really likes to chase, and occasionally throw it into the crate.



Once your dog willingly goes into the crate, start feeding him his meals there. Leave the crate door open all the time, so that he can go in and out on his own if he wishes.

After your dog is relaxed about going into the crate with the door open, put a treat in the crate, let him in, and close the door. Immediately praise him and give him more treats. After five minutes, open the door. Start extending the length of time you have your dog stay in the crate. Always give him praise and a treat when he enters the crate. Try putting a safe [chew toy](#) in the crate with him, to give him something to do. We recommend [interactive toys](#) that can be filled with treats so that your dog stays busy trying to get them out. Find a chew toy your dog really likes and only give it to him when he is in his crate, so that he makes a positive association between going into the crate and getting his favorite chew toy. Remember, the goal is to make the crate a place he likes to be.