



Crate Training

Many people associate kennel crates with imprisonment or punishment. It is actually a personal den or safe haven for the puppy. Crates minimize the stress and activity that comes with being left alone and having to deal with a large area. A crated puppy cannot pace back and forth or dart from window to window. He cannot work himself into a frenzy that also may include chewing and ransacking. These activities also lead to indoor accidents. Dogs are much more contented when they feel secure. Having his own personal "house" for when you are away will give your puppy the security he needs. It also assures you that he is behaving and you will be happy to see each other when you arrive home.

Puppies will try very hard not to soil their quarters. They like clean beds. This is the reason it is very successful to use crate training as part of your housebreaking regime. Most dogs enjoy tight spaces with little headroom. However, some dogs do need room to sprawl. Take notice how your dog uses space when he is let loose in a room. The size of the crate is very important. You may need to experiment a bit. If the dog soils the crate daily, it is probably too big. If the dog is able to curl up in one corner and soil the other corner; the crate is definitely too big. Do not put any absorbent bedding in the crate until you are sure that your puppy can control himself and keep it clean and dry. If the puppy continues to soil it, make sure that you are adhering to the correct schedule and the puppy has been fully exercised before being crated. Do not be late in getting the puppy out. A dog that is forced to soil his crate is a very unhappy dog. **Generally speaking, a puppy has the capability of holding one hour for every month of age.**

Introduce the puppy to the crate slowly. Feed him in it, put his toys in it, and hide goodies inside it. It should be fun to go inside. Put a chew toy inside, close the door and stay nearby. Talk to him, laugh, and then let the dog out with a big "Hooray!" Increase the length of time he is in the crate in small increments. Distance yourself, too. Sit across the room, and then sit in the next room. If he begins to whine, a sharply spoken "Quiet!" is necessary. If he quiets, wait a moment or so and then let him out. As long as he complains he stays. Don't reward a tantrum with freedom. If you've introduced the crate properly, and taken the time to make it fun, the puppy will be complaining not because he doesn't like his accommodations, but instead because he can't be with you when he wants to be.

***Note: In rare cases, some dogs will not accept being crated. For whatever reason, they become extremely anxious if confined. Some make every effort to escape. Signs of stress include incessant barking, shaking, trembling, extreme salivation and lathering. In most cases, the crate will be soiled repeatedly. If the dog becomes hysterical, do not force the issue. Some dogs just can't be trained using crates.