

Crate Training

Remember not to rush things! It can take days or weeks. Never use the crate as punishment, as they will learn to fear the crate and refuse to enter it.

***Picking a Crate** Your crate should be large enough for your dog be able to comfortably stand up, turn around and lay down. Make sure the crate is not too big to allow him to lay down at one end and have extra room at the other. Make sure that it's sturdy, a metal or plastic airline crates are best.

***Where to Place your Crate** The crate should be in the part of the house that your family spends most of their time; such as the family room or kitchen.

***Step 1** Bring your dog over to the open crate and talk to him in a happy tone of voice. Encourage your dog to enter the crate by dropping some small food treats nearby, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. If he doesn't enter the first time, it's ok. Continue this exercise until your dog is comfortable entering the crate. If your dog isn't interested in food, try tossing in a favorite toy.

***Step 2** Once your dog is readily entering the crate, start feeding their meals in the crate with the door closed. Place the food dish at the back of the crate. If he is reluctant in entering; place the food dish just inside the door and move it further back with each feeding. With each successful feeding leave the dog in the crate a little longer, until he's staying in the crate for 10 minutes for so after eating.

***Step 3** After your dog is eating regularly in his crate with no sign of fear or anxiety, you can start to confine him for short periods of time. Call him over to the crate and give him a treat. Give him a command to enter, such as "kennel". After entering praise him and give him a treat. Sit quietly next to the crate for 5-10 minutes and then go to another room for a few minutes. Return to the crate, sit by it for a few minutes and then let him out. Repeat this process several times a day, gradually increasing the length of time you're out of sight.

***Step 4** After your dog can be crated for 30 minutes without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving him crated for short periods when you leave the house. Command your dog to enter the crate with a few safe toys 5 minutes before leaving and give him a treat. Don't make your departures emotional and prolonged. When you return home, keep arrivals low key to avoid increasing anxiety upon return. Continue crating your dog for short periods from time to time when you're home so that he doesn't associate the crate with being left alone. It is also a good idea to crate your dog at night. Placing the crate in the bedroom or a nearby hallway at first and once he can sleep comfortably through the night, you can move it to the preferred location.

If you are experiencing any separation anxiety, excessive whining or any other problems, please call Talbot Humane at 410-822-0107 or a professional trainer.