

## CRATE TRAINING

Adding a puppy to the household can be a wonderful experience, but the relationship can sour before it even begins if the puppy is ruining carpets and chewing up furniture. There is, however, a training tool that will enable you to train your new companion and avoid a disaster—a crate.

Two types of crates are available. The first type is often made of heavy molded plastic or fiberglass and was originally used by airlines to transport animals. Wire crates, which provide good ventilation, are also available.

It's important that you understand that the crate is not a cage or jail. A crate is your puppy's own place: its bed or den, its place to hide special toys or treats and refuge in times of stress.

Puppies like to sleep in small, close spaces. That's why they curl up under the bed or under a chair, or crawl under the back porch. A crate allows you to use this instinct as a training tool.

Begin by choosing a crate size to suit your dog. The crate should be large enough for the puppy to stand up, stretch, turn around and lie down comfortably—with a little growing room. Don't get a crate that would fit an adult St. Bernard for a Springer puppy. Remember, the purpose behind using a crate to house-train the pup is to utilize the pup's instinct to keep its bed clean.

Introduce the pup to the crate by tossing a treat inside while the pup is watching. Let the puppy grab the treat and come back out. You may want to use a particular phrase to get the puppy into the crate ("kennel up"). Repeat the action a couple of times. You can also feed your puppy in the crate, letting him come and go as he pleases.

When the puppy is comfortable going in and out, toss a treat inside the crate, then close the door after the pup goes inside. Wait a couple of minutes then open the door. Gradually increase the time until the puppy is comfortable with the door being closed.

If your puppy throws a temper tantrum when you close the door, do not let the pup out until he is quiet. If you let the pup out when he cries, he will have learned temper tantrums work. Instead, tell the pup, "No! Quiet!" in a sharp tone of voice.

Your dog will still use his crate on his own, even when full-grown. Because the crate is your dog's special place, he will retreat there when the family is busy and he needs to sleep. And again, it's a safe, secure place.