

# Crate Training Your New Puppy

*By Brenda Howard*

**TIME FOR HOUSE TRAINING.** Keep your puppy safe in your home and prevent accidents of the chewing and elimination variety by providing a place for the puppy to be when you can't watch him. A crate large enough for the puppy to lie down and stand up in is best.

## **CRATE MEET PUPPY!** – *Introducing the puppy to the crate.*

Before you begin this lesson give the pup a chance to go potty outside. Open the crate door wide. Place a toy or two and a soft towel or blanket inside. Sit next to the crate with the puppy near you. Toss a tasty treat near the door of the crate to lure the puppy to the crate. Toss another treat just inside the door. Keep tossing and treating until the puppy is completely inside the crate. First lesson accomplished!

Once the puppy enters the crate on his own – not by being placed in the crate or forced into it, close the door. Leave the room for 5 minutes and come back and let the puppy out. Add to the time you are gone from the room slowly over several days (or sessions) and the pup will learn to enjoy his time in the crate. Keep your entrances and exits low key. Don't make a fuss. Tell the puppy quietly "good dog" when you let him out.

Ignore crying, whimpering or barking. Remember the puppy is safe and in no harm or danger! Do not let him bully you!

**WHERE IS THE BATHROOM?** A mother dog keeps her puppies clean. The offspring learn to move away from the "living area" of the bedding to eliminate. The same instincts work for you when you use a crate to house train your puppy. The puppy will prefer to do his potty away from where his bed is!

Now that the puppy has met the crate you can establish a routine for potty training. **FIRST** take the puppy outside and give him a chance to eliminate before placing him in his crate.

Praise the puppy for doing his business! You can give the pup a verbal cue by associating a word or phrase with the act of elimination. "Go Potty!" might be the cue you choose.

Each and every time you put the puppy into the crate give him a chance to go potty first. When you take the puppy out of the crate do the same thing – take him outside for the opportunity to go. With very small puppies you may need to carry them outside rather than on a leash to prevent an accident.

Be aware that small puppies have small bladders and have not

learned bladder control. Do not leave your puppy for hours at a time and expect him to hold. That would not be fair to the puppy. Do not use the crate for training if you are going to be away from home all day. Instead use it when you ARE home. Make sure the puppy has access to an appropriate "bathroom" during the long hours you are away at work.

Keep the crate next to your bed at night or where you can hear him if he fusses. There is no need to give the pup water in his crate during the night. If the puppy wakes you will take him outside for elimination. Taking a puppy out at 2 am isn't fun, but it's the best way to help your puppy learn where the bathroom is!

## **CRATING DURATION GUIDELINES\***

9-10 Weeks	Approx. 30-60 minutes
11-14 Weeks	Approx. 1-3 hours
15-16 Weeks	Approx. 3-4 hours
17 + Weeks	Approx. 4+ (6 hours maximum)

*\*NOTE: Except for overnight, neither puppies nor dogs should be crated for more than 5 hours at a time. (6 hours maximum!)*

**OOOOPSY – an accident!** If your puppy has an accident and you do not witness the act, simply clean it up. Do not rub his nose in it, hit your puppy or yell at him. He will not understand WHY you are doing this and he will not learn from it. Dogs and puppies live in the moment. If you catch the puppy in the act of elimination scold him by saying "BAD DOG!" and take him outside. The puppy must make the connection between his actions and your displeasure. He will learn quickly this way. You must be fair to the puppy. If he makes a mistake it is your fault – not his!

*Brenda Howard has been training dogs for over 20 years and is a member of The Association of Pet Dog Trainers, The American Bloodhound Club, and The American Boarding Kennels Association. Brenda and her husband, Walt Partin, are owners of BlooMoon Pet Resort LP.*

