

Washington Veterinary Clinic
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Crate Training Tips

Your crate provides the ventilation and clear visibility you and your pet need and will soon become a "home within a home." A dog will typically not mess in his sleeping area. Here are a few guidelines to follow:

1. Your crate should be placed in a "people area" such as a kitchen, family room, or bedroom so your pet will be able to interact with his new family. Keep the crate away from drafts or direct heat. You may want to place a blanket over the crate at night, if you have chosen an all wire crate.
2. Remove all collars and tags before placing your pet in his crate to prevent possible strangulation. Introduce the pet to his crate by giving a treat when the dog enters his crate or placing a toy inside for chewing.
3. Place your pet in the crate while using a command word such as "kennel" or "crate" or "go to bed" or "in your room" and offer him a treat. Dogs often do better if they can associate an action with a command word from you. The first few times the pet should be in the crate for only a short time. If your puppy is resisting going into the crate, start feeding him in the crate to get them more comfortable with being in it.
4. After your pet is comfortable in the crate for several minutes (5-10 min.) with you in the room, you should leave the room. At the first sign of any response to you leaving the room such as barking, howling, or crying, you should say, "No!" in a sharply raised voice. If there is no response to your raised voice, you may use coins shaken in a can while saying, "No!" Typically the pet will react to these actions and become quiet. Do not reenter the room while your pet is fussing. This would be a positive reinforcement for his unwanted behavior. When the pet has been quiet for at least 15 seconds, go in the room and praise him for being quiet.
5. If the above actions are not successful in getting your pet to crate and become quiet, contact our office or a trainer for other methods to try.
6. Repeat the above steps, extending the length of time the pet is crated until the pet can remain in the crate for the desired amount of time.
7. Praise the pet when he is in the crate, and give him a toy and reward after coming out so he will associate his crate as good. **DO NOT USE THE CRATE AS PUNISHMENT**, as this will provide a bad association for the pet.