



WHY SHOULD MY PUPPY GO IN A CRATE?

By Lynne Stephens

I guess when we think of puppies in crates, one of the pictures it conjures up in our minds is of the sad faces sometimes seen in pet stores, veterinarians offices or dog shelters.

I am often told by well-meaning owners that they would never dream of putting their dog in a crate as they feel it is a cruel thing to do. On the contrary, my advice to any dog owner is that crate training is one of the most important things to teach your puppy and the sooner he begins this training the better it will be for everyone. Why?

To protect my home and puppy.

How many times, I wonder, does the puppy that is free to roam at will in his "kindly" owner's home, cower in a corner on his return, wondering if he will be greeted by a happy or enraged human? How many of these owners have cried out in despair when, on returning home, they have discovered their most precious pair of shoes or the T.V. remote in shreds on the carpet next to some other little message left by the errant youngster. And how many have mistakenly read their puppy's cowering as a sign that he is "obviously guilty and knows exactly what he had done wrong"?

The fact of the matter is that this young puppy, bored and lonely in his owner's absence found some new super interesting toys to play with that his kindly human had left for him. After a few hours and needing to relieve himself, he used the carpet as a potty and waited eagerly for his human to return.

On his return, however, much shouting, screaming and maybe even some physical form of punishment ensued before this puppy was thrown out of the house while his owner began the extremely unpleasant task of cleaning up and counting the cost!

After one or two repetitions of this behavior, what has our puppy learned? Basically that pretty much any normal dog activities are absolutely fine to pursue when mum and dad are out of the house. However, it is most definitely not safe to be around when mum or dad do return home as they are usually in a rage and their anger is usually directed at him!

His cowering behavior is merely a result of having experienced the return of an enraged human on numerous occasions before.

Being able to leave your puppy safely and happily in a crate with safe, appropriate and relatively inexpensive dog toys while you are away from home would avoid all such scenarios.



To aid potty training.

All puppies are born with a natural instinct to be clean. From the very earliest age, while still in the nest with their mothers, as soon as their little legs will allow them, puppies are eager to leave their sleeping area to urinate and defecate. Potty training is a subject of great concern to new dog owners and deserving of a chapter of its own. However, you can see that, if your puppy really does not want to soil his sleeping area and if you have taught him to relax and sleep in a crate of his own when left unattended, you will have a very helpful tool when helping him to understand the unusual “rules of the potty” set out for him by his human housemates.

To provide a safe place for my puppy to be.

Many households are extremely busy places. You may have young children rushing around, elderly parents visiting or living with you, visitors, workmen and others dropping by from time to time. In addition to all this, there is the vacuum cleaner, dishwasher, drier and a multitude of other household appliances and strange human rituals to become accustomed to.

As with all youngsters, your new puppy needs sleep to help him to grow up as a healthy and well-adjusted young dog. He needs a safe haven to escape the hustle bustle at times. A crate trained puppy has such a haven and he will be eternally grateful to you for providing him with it.

To make traveling safer and easier.

Dogs traveling in cars are much safer and more comfortable than those we often see with their heads sticking out of the passenger side or back window, obscuring the driver’s view of the road. In the event of an accident, when your four legged friend is in a crate, he is less likely to be thrown through the vehicle window or hit a passenger.

To be welcome to stay in a hotel.

How many of you have ever found it difficult to find a hotel that would welcome both you and your four-legged friend into their midst? It is a sad fact that many hotels are less than eager to extend you a warm welcome. My guess is that part of the reason for this is that many of their past experiences with doggy guests have been less than positive. Dogs left in hotel rooms to cause damage, leave hair and make noise will do nothing to further the cause. A well-behaved, crate trained pet may go some way towards providing a remedy for the future.

To protect my guests!

If you have friends or family who are genuinely afraid of dogs or other animals, is it fair to subject them to their fears each time they visit? Indeed, have you ever stopped to consider why some of them don’t visit as much as they used to any more? A little crate training will go quite a way to ensuring that you not only have a happy dog, but you also keep your friends!



DOGLOGIC || CANINE EDUCATION

I hope that reading this article has convinced you to teach your puppy to enjoy his safe, cozy crate. If so, you will find tips on how to achieve this in my next article – “Crate training your puppy”.

@2008 DogLogic