



# Make Crates a Heavenly Haven for Hounds and Housecats

Revised from *How to Behave So Your Dog Behaves* by Sophia Yin, DVM

To those who are new to the concept of crate training, confinement in such a small space surely seems like some sort of medieval torture. But dogs and cats trained properly can see it in a whole different light. To them it's a safe-haven, a place to call their own. It can be like a modernized den or lair.

## Crates Can Save Your Sanity

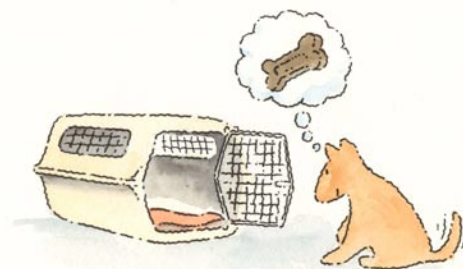
For owners of pups in potty training a crate can be their savior. During this piddly life stage there are only three safe sites for the young pup. The first two are: outside in a dog-safe area where the pup is free to do her duty or tethered via a leash to your side so you can take her outside at the first signs that she has to let loose. This tethering can get tedious, so here's where a comfy crate comes in handy. When you can't watch Fido like an eagle scouting out lunch, let him rest in his kennel that's roomy enough for her to move but small enough so that he holds his urge to go.

Training dogs and even cats to a crate can have a myriad of other great uses too. These portable dens can serve as a private place to rest when company is around or a safe night-time spot out of trouble. For any pet that travels, crate training allows you to bring the pooch or pussy cat's home along too. Now Bowser who normally bounces around in the car, or Kitty who's not used to going anywhere out of the house, or Dozer who doesn't know what to do in the hotel room when you're on vacation, can

feel more familiar or comfortable in their new situation.

## How to Train It.

Training pets to call their crate home is simple even for cranky cats and adult dogs. It's all about teaching them that great things happen when they are in their crate. The great thing we will use is food.



If your pet really dislikes being confined, start by feeding his daily meals just outside the crate. When he's comfortably eating his meals in this new location, move the food just inside the crate so he has to stick his head in to eat. Within a few days you should be able to move the feeding location further in so that he has to step in with his front feet. In this manner, gradually move the feeding location further and further in. Once he easily goes in and out on his own, you can start shutting the door while he's eating, or for dogs, putting him in with a special toy. This toy can be a Kong toy with a little canned food in it or a tasty bone for dogs. As soon as he's finished open the door to let him out. You can also randomly place secret food



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surprises for Fido or Kitty to find in the crate. Try peanut butter for dogs or tuna for cats smeared on the back wall of the crate or treats hidden under the blanket.

This process sounds like it will take a long time, but in reality it usually takes less than a week even in adult dogs that don't like a crate.

## Putting it on cue

Once Fido or Kitty anticipate crating by running in as soon as he sees you're bringing his meal, you can teach him the cue word "kennel" by saying the word every mealtime as or right before he heads into his crate. Also practice training this cue word randomly throughout the day by walking over with him towards his crate, saying "kennel" and then tossing a treat in. Once he goes in toss more treats to the back and even put him in a down-stay with the door open or closed and continue with the food rewards.

In order to turn the food lure into a reward so that Fido or Kitty learns to run to his crate whether or not you have food, walk with him towards his kennel while hiding a treat behind your back or in your hand or even having a treat already in his kennel. That way he sees and receives his reward only after he's gone in. You can also gradually increase the distance from which you send him to his crate. Once you progress through all of these simple steps you'll have a

hound or housecat that thinks his crate is a heavenly haven.

## Additional resources

Watch the following videos at [www.nerdbook.com/sophia](http://www.nerdbook.com/sophia)

- Crate Training
- Pepe Hates Crates