

# MISSISSIPPI MILLS

## — ANIMAL HOSPITAL —

PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

### CRATE TRAINING IN DOGS – TIPS FOR CRATE TRAINING

Teaching your dog to relax in a crate is an effective way of ensuring its safety while protecting your home and possessions from damage caused by chewing or other destructive behaviors.

#### CRATE TRAINING FOR PUPPIES

##### WHAT TYPE OF CRATE OR CONFINEMENT AREA WORKS BEST?

A metal, collapsible crate with a tray floor works well, as long as the crate is large enough for the dog to stand, turn, and stretch out. Some dogs feel more secure if a blanket is draped over the crate. A plastic traveling crate or a homemade crate can also be used. Playpens or barricades may also be successful as long as they are indestructible and escape proof.



##### WHERE SHOULD THE CRATE BE LOCATED?

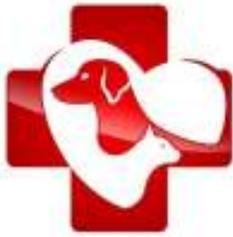
Because dogs are social animals, an ideal location for the crate is a room where the family spends time such as a kitchen, den, or in a bedroom where the dog might sleep at night.

##### HOW DO I CRATE-TRAIN MY NEW PUPPY?

Introduce the puppy to the crate as soon as it is brought home and as early in the day as possible. Place a variety of treats in the cage throughout the day so that the puppy is encouraged to enter voluntarily. Bedding, toys and water can also be offered to the puppy in the open cage. Food might be placed in the pen or crate if you wish to also designate it as a feeding area.

Choose a location outdoors for the puppy to eliminate. Take the puppy to the location, wait until the puppy eliminates, and reward the puppy lavishly with praise or food. After some additional play and exercise, and when you feel its time for your puppy to take a nap (or when you see your puppy begin to settle down for nap), place the puppy in its crate with water, a toy and a treat, and close the door.

If the puppy is tired and calm, it may take a "nap" shortly after being placed in its crate. If not, be certain to provide a few novel and stimulating toys or chews for play. In this way



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the crate serves two functions - as your puppy's bed (crib) or your puppy's play area (playpen).

Leave the room but remain close enough to hear the puppy. Escape behavior and vocalization are to be expected when a dog is first placed into its crate. If the "complaints" are short or mild, ignore your puppy until the crying stops. Never release the puppy unless it is quiet. This teaches that quiet behavior, and not crying will be rewarded. Release the puppy after a few minutes of quiet or a short nap.

A brief disruption may be useful to deter crying if it does not subside on its own. A shaker can (a sealed can filled with coins or marbles) can be shaken at the crate when the pup barks. Other methods include water sprayers or alarms (audible or ultrasonic). The owner should remain out of sight when using these disruptions. By plugging in an alarm, tape recorder, or hair dryer beside the crate and turning it on with a remote control switch each time the dog barks, the dog can be taught that barking has unpleasant consequences whether the owner is present or not. When the barking ceases, the disruption is stopped. Bark collars and alarms that are activated by the barking are also available for persistent problems. These latter techniques must be used with caution, since it can exacerbate the vocalization problem of a very anxious pet.



Repeat the cage and release procedure a few more times during the day, at each naptime and each time your puppy is given a toy or chew with which to play. Each time, increase the time that the dog must stay in the crate before letting it out. Always give the puppy exercise and a chance to eliminate before securing it in the crate.

At bedtime, the dog should be exercised, secured in its crate, and left for the night. Do not go to the dog if it cries. Remote punishment can be used to deter crying. You might choose to leave the crate in the same place as it has been during the day, or you might move it to the bedroom (or a second crate could be used).

If the pup sleeps in one end of its crate and eliminates in the other, install a divider to keep the puppy in a smaller area, as long as you do not leave it in the crate for long periods. Never leave the puppy in its crate for longer than it can control its bowels or bladder or it may be forced to eliminate in the crate.

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If the puppy must eliminate, it does not matter how small the area is; the puppy will have to eliminate.

If the pup must be left for long periods during which it might eliminate, it should be confined to a larger area such as a dog-proof room or pen, with paper left down for elimination. As the puppy gets older, its control increases and it can be left longer in its crate.

Although there is a great deal of individual variability, many puppies can control themselves through the night by 3 months of age. During the daytime, once the puppy has relieved itself, a 2-month old puppy may have up to 3 hours control, a 3-month puppy up to 4 hours, and a 4- month old puppy up to 5 hours.

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