



RSPCA School for Dogs Information Sheet

Benefits of a Crate Trained Dog

Often thought that dog crates are only for sending your dog on a plane or at the vets? Dogs are hardwired by their genetic history to be “den” animals. Crates are dens, NOT doggy jails! There are many benefits of having a crate trained dog. The following are some scenarios that may help to convince you.

Managing Barking

Scenario one: Your dog barks uncontrollably at possums and bats at night, but you don't want to bring him inside because he will chew up all the furniture. So you tolerate the barking (but your neighbours have other ideas) and you get a notice from your local council.

Scenario two: Your dog barks uncontrollably at possums and bats at night, so you teach him to love his crate, come inside at night and he sleeps all the way through the night because he is not disturbed by the night dwellers. He can't chew up the furniture (because he is in his crate), and you don't have to have that uncomfortable chat with your neighbours. Instead you invite them around for a BBQ.

On Holidays

Scenario one: You and your partner decide to take a holiday with your dog to a dog friendly caravan park on the coast. Unfortunately when you arrive, the owners tell you that the dog isn't allowed inside the cabin (even though it said dogs OK on the brochure) because your dog is a Rottweiler and they only allow small dogs inside the cabins. You spend a sleepless night with your dog tied to the post outside the cabin, hoping that a wandering tenant doesn't walk too close to your dog.

Scenario two: Same as above but your dog sleeps happily in his crate on the porch and you get a good night's sleep, both of you ready to enjoy the dog beach the next day.

Reduce Arousal Levels/Switch Off

Scenario one: You own a high-drive Border Collie who is so overstimulated he is bouncing off the walls. Everything sets him off including cars, possums, other dogs (particularly if they are chasing something), basically movement of any kind. You are at the end of your tether and consider surrendering your dog as you can't teach him anything.

Scenario two: You own a high-drive Border Collie who is now calm because you have taught him to love his crate and he will “ask” to be put in there so he can relax and switch off. You can now teach him things and channel his drive into more appropriate behaviours.

Kids and Dogs

Scenario one: You have 4 kids under the age of 10, an 8 month old Labrador and are hosting a birthday party for your 5 year old (with 15 guests). The dog is overstimulated due to all the noise and accidentally knocks over the 5 year old who throws a tantrum and starts screaming. While all the fuss is happening and you're consoling the 5 year old, the Labrador jumps up onto the kitchen bench and steals the cupcakes (and knocks down the icing bowl onto his head in the process). The



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noise is unbearable and while the kids try to rescue the cupcakes, the Labrador has other ideas and races outside with 3 excited kids in pursuit. You think about taking the dog to “the farm”.

Scenario two: Your Labrador is sitting happily in his crate chewing on a bone, the kids are getting excited by their impending play date, cupcakes (and dog) are safe and you are halfway to staying sane.

Visitors

Scenario one: You’re racing around tidying up the house for your visitors. The dog is over stimulated by all the noise and movement, concerned by your stress and getting under your feet. Suddenly the doorbell rings (they’re early), the dog goes ballistic, you trip over him on the way to the door, when you open the door, the dog jumps all over your visitors (including your elderly aunt who screams), then you send your dog outside in disgust, who balks at the door because he doesn’t understand why you hyped him up in the first place? You’re stressed, your dog is stressed and your elderly aunt has a stern word to you about “that dog”

Scenario two: You have 10 minutes before your visitors arrive and your dog is happily sitting in his crate chewing on a pig’s ear. The doorbell rings, your dog may have a little bark to let you know (this is ok!), but you tell him that it’s all good, answer the door, your aunt comes inside and raves about how well trained the dog is and how quiet he is. When everyone is settled and your dog has finished his pig’s ear, you let him out and because he is so calm, greets everyone nicely and gets lavished with pats and praise!

Stress Relief (for the shy/timid dog!!)

Scenario one: You have an anxious dog you have picked up from an animal shelter who has an unknown history, but you suspect that the history has been a sad one. Your dog often gets overwhelmed easily, often seems stressed and tends to pace. Your dog won’t sleep on the beds you have provided and you often find her curled up under a bed or table. She does seem to get anxious when you go out.

Scenario two: Your anxious dog finds comfort in a dark, warm, comfy cubby house crate that feels like a den to her. Now you can start to build her confidence knowing that she always has a safe place to go.

New Puppy

Scenario one: Your kids have finally convinced you to get a puppy. You have all decided on which one and bring the puppy home with excited anticipation. Having read all the books and done a lot of research, you are fairly confident that you have the toilet training side of things down pat. However, this puppy “is not like your last one” and continually soils all over the house, even though you take him outside often. Finally, it’s the last straw when you find an accident in the lounge room, blow up at everyone because you “can’t supervise the puppy 24 hours a day!” The puppy is now convinced you are evil and decides to always go to the toilet when you’re not looking (in the bedroom).

Scenario two: Once you bring your puppy home, you start crate training immediately, introducing the crate as the best place ever for the puppy. The puppy loves his crate, doesn’t want to soil his “den” and waits patiently to be taken outside every 2 hours to go to the toilet. You can actually get some work around the house done (and go to the toilet without the puppy following you), and you don’t have to spend a fortune on carpet cleaners.



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At the Vets/Rehabilitation from Injury

Scenario one: Your dog hates the vet. Alarmingly, he was chasing the ball, and did some damage to his leg. Now, your dog is facing surgery with 6 weeks “bed rest”. How is your dog going to cope being confined, let alone 3 days of it at a vet surgery?

Scenario two: Your dog still hates the vet, but you are feeling slightly better knowing that your dog is very well crate trained! He seems to cope well with extra crate time, and you can now spend some time thinking of great games and tricks to teach him that don't involve a lot of activity.



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