



## **Crate Training**

A crate is a safe and secure environment for your dog. Think of it like their bedroom! It is a training aid and helps because;

- It keeps the dog safe when you are busy
- It can be used as a calm station for your over-excited dog
- It protects your home from damage when you are out

- It can be transferred to the car or a holiday home

The crate must be big enough to allow your dog to stand up, turn around and stretch inside. You should put a water bowl inside and toys to keep your dog occupied. It should be placed in a quiet area, but it is beneficial if the dog can see/ hear what is going on. Dogs should not be left for long periods of time in a

crate and please be aware that dogs can tip their water bowls over, resulting in wet bedding which is not good for them to sleep in.

If the crate is near the back door, this can prevent accidents in the early stages of toilet training. It is advisable to move the crate near your bedroom during the night. It comforts your dog to be near you and can prevent isolated feelings and whining. If

your dog settles away from you, then fantastic news! A dog that is able to settle itself can be left without becoming distressed and causing alarm to neighbours. This is an extremely positive thing.

The crate needs to be welcoming to your dog. You want them to feel safe and happy within their 'bedroom' and to have a positive association therefore feed them in it, give them chews or stuffed Kongs whilst in the crate. Every time you put the dog in the crate be sure to give them a biscuit or other food treat.

In the early stages, you can split the crate in to two sections on the floor, one half bedding and the other newspaper or toilet mats. The dog can use the mat to toilet if it is desperate – when you gotta go, you gotta go! Change the mat after each toileting incident (with the

dog not present) and do not scold them for this.

### **They don't like the crate? Try this.....**

Leave the crate door open so he can come and go as he pleases and use high value treats to reinforce that the crate is a good thing! Good things happen here! Pop treats near the cage door at the start, then begin to put them nearer the crate, then gradually pop treats inside the crate door and further in thereafter.

Once the dog is entering the crate, you can put a cue on it, such as 'Go to bed'. The dog will then associate the cue with the action.

All training has to go at the dog's pace.

Avoid physically pushing your dog in, as this will only (most likely) create fear/suspicion and a negative association with the crate and yourself. You may have to gently lift/encourage a young pup in to the crate.

Once your dog is happy to go in to the crate, you can feed him in there and provide high value treats, such as Kongs/ puzzle feeders/ licki mats. Leave the door open for the first while. When you feel the dog is comfortable, push the door over and hang about, suggesting to the dog that this is no big deal!

When you know your dog has toileted, you can place a treat (as suggested previously) in to the crate and when the dog goes in, close the door over. At this stage, leave the dog for a few moments (unless they are very distressed, in which case please comfort them as this can create separation issues) and keep the door closed for short periods.

So long as all associations are positive with the crate, your dog should settle quickly.

When letting your dog out of the crate, remain in a calm state so that the dog does not get too excited, noisy and perhaps even

toilet! Take the dog to their toilet area as soon as they come out of the crate.

The crate can be used to house your dog when you are out of the home, at work, in the shower, during family meal times and when you have visitors (these may be frightened or dislike dogs).

**The crate is not for punishment**, but should be used as a tool to house a tired or over excited dog.

**© The Dog Learning Centre L Haydon/C Russell**



# Dog Learning

The Dog Learning Centre

## **Handling/Husbandry**

We must get our dogs used to being handled from a young age. This habituates them to being petted by visitors to our home and handled at grooming and vet visits. If a dog is not used to being handled, it invokes emotions of fear and negativity. We want our dogs to be well rounded members of society and to enjoy being handled and petted. Not all dogs will enjoy this though and you must take note if your dog does not wish to be touched in certain ways or areas and respect this. Any discomfort shown by the dog means that you must stop and give the dog a break. Go back to the start of your handling and go slower this time, in the hope the dog

accepts the touch. Work slowly and this should habituate the dog to the handling. If not, you may need to seek veterinary advice to ensure there is no underlying medical reason for the resistance.

- *Stroke dog from his head all the way down his back. Mark and reward*
- *Run hand down the dog's tail. Mark and reward*
- *Run hands gently down each leg and lift their paws for a quick peek/hold. Mark and reward*
- *Stroke the dog's head and lift each ear, look inside. Mark and reward*
- *Lift the dog's muzzle and check his teeth. Mark and reward*
  - *Hold the muzzle gently and stroke*



*under the eye area and lift the brows softly allowing an eye check. Mark and reward*

*This is the basics of handling/husbandry and merely the beginning of a lifelong journey to habituating your dog to many things in life. Your dog has so much to get used to in the big wide world; cars, bathing, strangers to name a few. Using positive training, you can make this so much easier for the dogs in our lives.*

**© The Dog Learning Centre L Haydon/  
C Russell**



# Dog Learning

The Dog Learning Centre

## **House Training**

Educate your dog to go in the right place. This is so important and prevents your dog from learning from accidents. You want to demonstrate a routine quickly and take your pup to the toilet once every hour during the day. Dogs all learn at different paces and while some get it quickly, others need patience to get there.

### **Key Times are;**

After sleeping - After eating - After playing

Teach your dog the routine and as soon as they perform (the toilet!) praise them. This reinforces that they have done the right thing and they will link your reaction to their

behaviour (of toileting in the right place). Never scold your dog if they have an accident – this is always our fault. If we scold the dog, they may learn to become frightened of us or the act of toileting.

Go outside with your dog when they are still learning. Take them into the garden/ toilet area on a lead and NEVER leave them alone. If the dog is not on lead they will do the normal doggy thing such as scent and play and you might

miss the important toileting; if you cannot praise the correct behaviour, they will not learn quickly. You must be animated with your dog when they do the right thing – they are like little toddlers! They love praise, especially coming from their people. Most dogs want to be with and please their people, so we must let them know exactly how good a boy/girl we think they are! (Drama lessons can be attached to this course if required!!!)

In order to make life easier, think about leaving wellies/ umbrella at the back door to make this process as easy as possible for you all.

When your dog is ‘performing’ this is a good time to say your toilet cue ‘wee wee’, ‘pee’, ‘poo’ so on and so forth. This allows the dog to understand what they are doing and when you say it enough times during the act of toileting, you can

then put this on cue: i.e. taking your dog outside at night for a last ‘pee’ they know exactly what you are expecting of them.

Once you have successfully toileted in the appropriate area with your dog, then is the time to explore your garden and have a little fun. Pretend you are a dog! Look at the flowers/ shrubs/bushes around you, point things out to your dog – your dog will love investigating with you! This act is in itself a reward to your dog. Do not make toileting

all about business with no fun. Toddlers (and dogs) don't like business only!

## **PREVENT PREVENT PREVENT**

Crates, baby gates, puppy pens and house leads will be your best friends during this teaching period. Prevent your dog from having free access to all areas of your home, this will overwhelm them and you are more likely to spend time clearing up after your dog than enjoying them. Set them up for success at every turn!

Whenever you are busy or need to go out, pop your dog into a crate or secure area. It is useful to teach dogs that you cannot always be there and they need to learn to settle themselves. This can also be a hugely distressing time (being left alone) so you could always pop some nightwear or a t-shirt that belongs to you in with dog. This is particularly useful for puppies as world is brand new to them and they are used to

being with someone (their mum/ litter mates/ you).

If your dog makes a mistake and toilets in the house, ask yourself what you could have done to prevent it rather than blaming your dog.

### **Clean up thoroughly**

Pop your dog out of sight and then clean up the accident thoroughly. Some dogs enjoy the cleaning up process, shredding kitchen roll or trying to bite your hands and play as you clean. To prevent this happening, pop your dog into their crate or ask another family member to keep a close eye on them whilst you clean.

Dogs learn their toilet area by scent. In order to remove the scent you need to remove the enzymes left by the urine. Normal household cleaners will not kill the enzymes therefore your dog is likely to use the same area again.

Vets and pet stores sell a variety of cleaners that will do the trick.

**© The Dog Learning Centre L Haydon/C Russell**



# Dog Learning

The Dog Learning Centre

## **Mouthing/Chewing**

Dogs use their mouth and teeth to explore their world in the way we use our hands, this is a normal dog behaviour. Puppies teethe up until around seven months of age (they should have a full set by eight months), and chewing helps to alleviate the discomfort of teething. Chewing is a stress reliever and releases endorphins (feel good hormones).

Incisors 2-5 months Canines 4-6 months  
Pre-molars 4-7 months Molars 5-7 months

It is vital at this stage that you manage your dog's environment. Anything you do not want chewed must be out of the dog's reach, behind gates or up high. Anything your dog



can chew is fair game to them. Your dog won't think 'these are her favourite slippers, this is naughty but I can't help myself', he will simply think 'wow! This is enjoyable!'. You cannot train your dog when you are not present, so set them up for success and only leave things out for them that you are happy for them to chew on. This must be appropriate dog chewing material. It is innate behaviour for dogs to chew and it is best to provide an array of toys for them to choose from. If they like to chew on wood provide antlers for them, if they like leather then offer them rubber toys.

There is a huge choice on the market for dog toys; soft, squeaky, hard, rubber, plastic etc. You can pop certain toys in the fridge or freezer, or, wet the soft toys under a tap and these can be used as soothers for sore teeth and gums. Dogs must be supervised with all toys in case of choking. Kong feeders are unlikely to present a choking hazard (these

are excellent crate companions) but all other toys should be removed when the dog is alone.

Puzzle enrichment feeders are a great way to get your dog using their brain in order to work out how to get the food out! Dogs will instinctively use their mouths and this can channel the chewing urge.

Dogs in general adore the attention of their people and in this way, we can shape and train their behaviour. If a dog receives attention for chewing on something they shouldn't, there is a chance they will repeat this behaviour (even if the attention is negative). Having a chew, a 'chase' from you, even if they're told to stop or have the item removed from their possession, it can turn into a fun game for them. When your dog has something they shouldn't, use one of their toys to gain their attention and swap it with them. You may need to become animated and 'play' with the toy yourself so

that your dog curiously wonders what Mum or Dad has! Give the toy to your dog when they show an interest and praise them for making a good choice.

In a nutshell

- Manage the dog's environment, ensure the items you don't want chewed are out of reach
- Provide an array of toys for your dog to chew on and rotate them weekly to keep it exciting
- Freeze soft toys as an extra soother for sore teeth and gums
- Reward all good chewing choices

- Do not allow your dog to chew old shoes/ slippers, this can lead to confusion for them
- Swap and behave in a calm, neutral manner to the undesirable chewing choices (they don't know what is valuable or sentimental. They are just curious like children) If the chewing is excessive and these tips do not work, then seek veterinary advice in case there is a medical issue.

**© The Dog Learning Centre L  
Haydon/C Russell**



# Dog Learning

The Dog Learning Centre

## **Recall**

Why do we train 'RECALL'? To obtain your dog back in any circumstance, for safety reasons and to be a responsible owner. A loose dog can be a loose cannon!

## **Equipment List**

Flat collar

Fitted harness (if preferred to a flat collar)

High value treats (chopped up chicken/hot dogs/cheese), the smellier the better Toys (squeaky are best)

- To begin your training you must start in a distraction free environment (your home or garden is perfect for this).

First of all you must select your recall 'cue' (such as 'come', 'here', 'this way'). Have your dog on a lead/long line and allow them to wander off a small distance away from you. Start by making noises (these can be kissy sounding noises) to catch your dog's attention, you can even get down to their level. If your dog does not look or respond, you will need to make yourself more exciting!

When your dog is on their way back to you, say your cue for recall. Praise your dog as soon as they get to you with toy/treat/praise. No matter how long it takes them, always reward their return and NEVER punish. Would you be keen to come back to someone if you had been scolded? I wouldn't!

Repeat the exercise slowly and increase the distance. When it appears you have success with this, try another person or family member holding the lead. You may need to

decrease the distance when beginning with a new person.

Dogs will simply not come every time they are called. If the dog ignores you, make yourself super interesting. Make them want to join your party!

When dogs do not come to you, it is not because they are naughty or disobedient. They become immersed in the environment. The sights, smells and sounds of the world around them. Being outside is your dogs version of reading the newspaper or watching TV. We've all been engrossed in TV and not heard someone talking to us. So when they do come, praise them, regardless of the time it takes them. To punish or ignore them only serves to discourage a repeat recall to you.

This must be practised at home. The garden is ideal to train your dog;

Little to no distractions Your dog can't escape

Short five minute daily training sessions  
Repeat until you have aced the cue!

Once you have mastered this with your dog, you are then ready to move to an environment with a few distractions. A secure field or quiet park is ideal for this, somewhere with no other dogs or livestock nearby. This is upping the ante for your dog in comparison to your home or garden. Your dog should still be kept on a long line at this point.

Move around with your dog and he should naturally focus on the environment, wait for him to turn his attention to you and reward this. **ALWAYS REWARD WITH HIGH VALUE TREATS AND PRAISE EVERY SINGLE TIME YOUR DOG COMES BACK TO YOU!**



It is normal to prove harder to get the dog's attention here, so you may have to up the ante of silly noises/behaviour from you. Avoid calling your dog's name to gain their attention, stick to saying your cue as the dog is en-route back to you. This reaffirms the cue means return, as he is physically moving towards you. Some people shout 'come' before their dog has decided to return and this can lead to your dog thinking that 'come' means stop and stare at Mum or run away from Dad. As humans if something doesn't happen for us, our innate behaviour pushes us to try harder. The elevator didn't come quick enough for you? Well then push the button a few more times, perhaps push it harder!?! (we've all done that) Fido! Come Fido! Fido come now!!!!..... meanwhile Fido is off chasing rabbits.

When you feel your dog is coping in this environment and your recall cue is met with

success, you can drop the lead or remove it altogether.

Do not set the dog up to fail, practise, practise, practise before you take the next step to a place where there are distractions such as people/dogs/livestock/wildlife.

When you want to try an area with normal life going on that you have no control over, pop your dog back on the long line. You may have success with your recall in the garden and in a secure, quiet place but you are a beginner in this new place you have selected. We always set the dog up for success.

Allow the dogs to assess their environment, there is no set time scale where you should interrupt this behaviour, unless it is unsafe for them to do so. If you have not been able to get your dogs attention, shift your feet, even the slightest turn of their head indicates that the dog is with you, aware of your

movement behind them. At this stage it is hoped you would not need to use noises to attract the dogs attention.

Keep enough distance that your dog does not get too aroused. If your dog does become too interested/aroused, increase the distance from these distractions. (Taking a step back)

The aim is to get the dog to 'check in' with you out of choice. When they see something new or interesting (rabbits/dogs etc) their natural behaviour becomes looking at you and these objects. Boom! The dog is checking in regularly.

Whenever it doesn't work out in dog training, it is simply information that the training is not strong enough in that particular environment, that you have asked a little too much from the dog at that time. It is not a fail and it is never the dog's fault. Take a step back and begin again. In this

instance it would be giving the dog more space/distance from the distractions.

When your dog looks at you, you are rewarding with PRAISE/NOISES/ TREATS/ TOYS. You can use one or two of these (all would be overkill and confusing for the dog). This takes work, practise and dedication. Each individual dog learns at their own pace and you can only get out of your dog what you put in. Be consistent and set your dog up for success. If it doesn't work out, take a step back and begin again. All training should be fun for the owner and dog. If it doesn't feel fun, or you are not in the right mood, then leave it for another day.

**© The Dog Learning Centre L Haydon/C Russell**



# Dog Learning

The Dog Learning Centre

## Cues

Training your dog can start at any age and the sooner the better! The Dog Play and Learning Centre are both positive, modern and ethical in our work with dogs.

In order to get the dog to work with us, we must be aware of their good behaviour. If we provide the dog with a treat, something they really want/love, then they are highly likely to repeat the behaviour again. Dogs love to work with us and if they are praised and rewarded, it is the start of a good system!

Treats need to be something really tasty; think of your dog like a bank account, if you put the good stuff in you will reap the

rewards (chopped hot dog/liver/ham/ chicken/ cheese for older dogs and good quality kibble for pups). You must take into account the daily amount of food your pup/ dog should receive and factor that in to their diet. You could weigh out the dog's daily food amount and use this for training/Kongs/ food puzzles etc, then if there is any left overs you can feed that as the evening meal. You should also verbally praise your dog when you are rewarding them by saying things such as 'Good boy', 'Nice work', 'Well

done'. Use a variety of words in praise. Good boy good boy good boy good boy can become a bit repetitive and cause your dog to 'switch off' to white noise

Punishment should never be used in training. This will damage the relationship you have with your dog and can teach him to fear you. This can lead to the dog reacting aggressively in defence in the future.

Punishment is aversive, antiquated and will cause your dog to mistrust you.

**Training should be FUN!**

**Training exercises your dog's brain.**

**Training strengthens the bond between you and your dog.**

**It should always be on a POSITIVELY REINFORCED basis.**

**Show your dog what you want him to do, but never physically force him.**

**Be patient, clear and consistent.**

**Keep the session short – if your dog loses focus then stop training (you will waste your time if he is switched off or focused on other things).**

**Begin training in a quiet environment (the home, garden) without distractions – do not ask too much of your dog.**

**Never ever, ever punish your dog!**

The Dog Learning Centre runs classes that will show you how to do the practical 'training with cues' on site, however, knowing the theory behind this will assist you greatly.

In our practical training/cue session we cover the following; Sit Down Stay

The training/cue session will be around a third of a lesson.

Please email [info@thedogplaycentre.com](mailto:info@thedogplaycentre.com) if you are interested in booking classes.

**© The Dog Learning Centre L Haydon/C Russell**



