



Kandi Burkhardt | 910.333.2100  
**Obedience | Puppy Foundation | Therapy Dog**  
**AKC & UKC Titles | K9 Education**  
HavenCanine.com  
Facebook.com/HavenDogTrainingLLC  
*Voted Best Dog Trainer 7 Years in a Row!*



## BASIC CRATE TRAINING GUIDE

### YOUR TRAINER'S PERSPECTIVE



Do not rush crate training. Like every other dog training skill... you are building a new habit.

With history of repetition... the habit becomes muscle memory. Spend a few days practicing each phase before progressing.

The more positive experiences your dog has inside the crate... the more naturally they will choose to relax there.

---

### SOME BENEFITS OF CRATE TRAINING



- Keeps your dog safe when you cannot supervise
- Helps prevent destructive behaviors
- Creates a comfortable, secure resting place
- Assists with potty-training
- Helps build independence and may reduce separation-related issues
- Makes traveling safer and easier
- Encourages deeper, uninterrupted rest
- Reduces stress if your dog is ever hospitalized, groomed, boarded, traveling, staying in a hotel, or during emergencies

---

### PART 1 — MAKING THE CRATE FUN



#### TO BEGIN

Leave the crate door open. Toss a treat **just inside** the crate entrance. Allow your dog to go inside and get the treat.

As soon as they **turn** to come back out... happily say, "**Come,**" or simply use their name. Reward when they get to you.

Do **not** close the crate door. You're simply creating a fun 'game' with this exercise.

Repeat for a few minutes. Practice several times each day for a few days. As your dog becomes comfortable... gradually toss the treat farther inside the crate.

## PART 2 — ADDING YOUR KENNEL CUE



### YOUR GOAL

To teach your dog:

- How to enter the crate
  - How to remain calm
  - How to wait for permission to exit
- 

### TO BEGIN



With the crate door still open... say, "**Kennel.**" (or whatever cue you choose). Use a happy tone.

Toss a treat inside. When your dog enters... mark, "**Yes.**"

Immediately toss another treat farther inside. Allow your dog to get it.

When your dog **turns** back toward you... lift your hand (palm up) and cue, "**Sit.**"

When your dog sits... mark, "**Yes.**" Then treat reward.

While your dog remains sitting... calmly invite them to come out. Reward again.

Repeat for 3–5 minutes. Practice 3–4 times each day for a few days.

---

## PART 3 — BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER



Now you will begin closing the crate door.

Say, "**Kennel.**" Toss the treat inside. Allow your dog to enter. Close the crate door. Wait only a few seconds.

Open the crate door and lift your hand (palm up) and cue, "**Sit.**" When your dog sits... mark, "**Yes.**" Then treat reward.

While your dog remains sitting... calmly invite them to come out. Reward again.

Repeat for 3–5 minutes. Practice 3–4 times each day for a few days.

---

### IMPORTANT



Your dog's behavior controls this process. Do **not** release your dog if they are:

- Jumping
- Whining
- Barking
- Pawing at the door

Instead... without urgency... wait for calmness. Wait for a sit. Then calmly open the door.

Invite your dog out. Then reward.

Gradually increase the amount of time your dog remains inside the crate at this phase.

Practice several times each day.

---

## IF YOUR DOG BECOMES OVER-EXCITED

If your dog becomes over-excited **after** you begin opening the crate door to release... Immediately stop.

Calmly close the door again. Wait for calmness. Wait for a sit.

Then **begin** to open the door again. If your dog remains calm... continue opening the door. And invite them out.

Remember... your dog's behavior controls this process.

**Jumping** → **makes the door close.**

**Calmness** → **makes the door open.**

---

## FEEDING INSIDE THE CRATE

Feeding meals inside the crate helps build a positive emotional association.

Your dog begins viewing the crate as a place where good things happen.

### Step 1 (1-2 days)

Feed approximately **one-quarter** of the meal inside the crate.

When your dog begins eating... close the crate door. When they finish... wait for a calm sit. Release.

Repeat the process with the next one-quarter of the meal. Then again until the meal is finished.

---

### Step 2 (1-2 days)

Feed **half** of each meal inside the crate. Repeat the same process as before.

---

### Step 3 (1-2 days)

Feed the **entire** meal inside the crate. **Wait a couple of minutes.** Release in appropriate manner after the meal.

---

**Gradually** increase this time you leave your pup inside the crate over the next several days.

---

## IMPORTANT



If your dog whines or barks... ignore it.

Do not: - Talk to them - Look at them - Acknowledge it

Most important... **Do not release your dog during any whining or barking.**

Otherwise... your dog begins believing that behavior opens the crate door.

Instead... teach them that **calmness and manners** are what opens the door.

---

## MORE TIPS



Help make the crate your dog's favorite place.

1. Give special chews, stuffed Kongs, or Pickle Pockets only inside the crate.
  2. Introduce new toys inside the crate first so the crate becomes associated with exciting and rewarding experiences.
  3. Never use the crate as punishment.
  4. Don't use the crate only when you're leaving the house. Practice crate time while you're home so your dog doesn't associate the crate only with being left alone.
  5. Create household rules: No adults... no children... no other pets... should disturb your dog while they are resting inside the crate. This should always remain their sanctuary.
  6. White noise, brown noise, or calming background sounds (such as Alexa) may help some dogs relax.
- 

