

FEATURE ARTICLE

HUNTERDON DOGS
MEMBER **ANDREA
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In this article, Andrea explores the pivotal decision of whether to crate your new furry family member or not. The article emphasizes the positive impact of introducing the crate as a constructive tool, offering practical tips to make it a comfortable and positive space for your pup.

TO CRATE OR NOT TO CRATE?





To Crate or Not to Crate, That is the Question.

Article by: Andrea Jeszenszky

So, you have a new furry family member. Now what?

You overdose on his cuteness and want to give your new family member the best life you can. You want to get puppy kisses, play with him, buy him every toy imaginable and let him run free.

As time goes by, your new fur baby develops behavioral issues such as jumping on guests who visit your house, chewing on things they shouldn't, potentially destroying furniture, counter surfing, incessant barking and going potty in the house. Add "convenient obedience" or "selective hearing" into the mix, and now your newest family member is looking a

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Andrea embarked on her 20-year dog training journey in Europe during her early years, eventually becoming a full-time expert in the field. She expanded her expertise in the United States under the mentorship of accomplished trainers. Having successfully trained hundreds of dogs worldwide, she now focuses on the Hunterdon County area. In addition to standard on and off-leash obedience training, behavior modification, and puppy training, Andrea specializes in preparing dogs for Schutzhund/IPO/IGP Competitions—a challenging sport assessing obedience, tracking, and protection skills. Notably, Andrea's personal Rottweilers clinched first place in these competitions. With a background in psychology and an MBA, Andrea seamlessly integrates her education with canine psychology, striving to help each dog self-actualize. Her ultimate goal is to bring out the best in every dog, fostering an unbreakable bond between the pet and owner, ensuring years of joy together. To explore how Andrea can assist you and your dog, please contact her at her website: www.k9professional.com or email at: info@k9professional.com.

little less cute. At this point you are puzzled as to why your fur baby does these things and how to stop these behaviors.

This article was written by one of our Hunterdon Dogs community members, Andrea Jeszenszky. Check out her bio above!

You can prevent such issues by using the crate in a positive manner. Crates can be a negative or positive experience for your dog. It all depends on how you introduce it. Making your dog's crate a positive place can be a game-changer for them and you. **Here are some tips for making your dog's crate a positive experience.**

- 1** Feed your dog in the crate. This includes all treats, bones (if you choose to provide) and chew toys.
- 2** Keep the crate in the least trafficked area of the home.
- 3** Use a plastic crate so your dog doesn't get caught in the wires.

These tips allow your dog's crate to become his "restaurant" and his "den." It becomes his place to relax and sleep.

Who doesn't love restaurants? Who doesn't love a refuge for some good old-fashioned me-time? Just like humans, dogs relish in these simple pleasures. When all the good things occur in the crate, it will become a safe, positive den for the dog.

How does this benefit you?

Let's start with when you're away from home. If you need to leave your puppy at home, place him in the crate. Dogs instinctively avoid soiling where they sleep, but it's your responsibility to let them out regularly to prevent accidents. By fostering a positive association with the crate, your puppy will willingly use it, knowing positive experiences are associated with it.

Now, let's shift our focus to when you're at home. My recommendation might surprise you—I propose leaving your dog in the crate when you cannot give him the attention he needs. For a new dog, constant supervision or confinement in the crate is advisable until they grasp the household rules. When your dog is outside the crate, use a light leash for easy supervision. Holding the leash enables you to guide him in understanding what's appropriate to play with or chew. Additionally, if he needs to go to the bathroom, the leash allows you to promptly take him out, minimizing the risk of accidents in the home.

Quick, "at a glance" overview to help you use the crate when you are home or away from home.

Simple Tips Breakdown

When away from home:

1. Place your puppy in the crate.
2. Provide an engaging item (marrow bone, Kong toy with treats inside, etc.).
3. Ensure frequent outings to prevent accidents in the crate.
4. Make the crate a positive place to encourage your puppy's willingness to use it.

When at home:

1. Leave your dog in the crate when unable to supervise.
2. Supervise a new dog or keep him in the crate until he learns house rules.
3. Use a light leash when your dog is out of the crate for better supervision.
4. With the leash in hand, monitor play and chewing activities.
5. Take your dog outside immediately if he needs to go to the bathroom to minimize indoor accidents.

Think of it this way: Would you let a two year old child crawl all over the house without supervision? I hope not. Puppies are not any smarter than a human baby. New dogs in the house don't know your rules, so they need just as much supervision.

Pro Tip:

When you crate your new dog make sure the crate is big enough so the dog can stand up and turn around comfortably. When you have a dog that is not housebroken yet, you need to make sure the crate is snug enough so your puppy cannot make a mess in one corner and leave it behind by going to the other side of the crate. Once they are house broken you can give your dog plenty of space. Some crates have dividers for this.

Crates are excellent training tools. As your dog's obedience improves, he can receive more freedom. This is a step function. Crates are a building block to better behaved dogs. You determine if the crate is negative like a jail or a positive like a restaurant or safe haven. Make it positive; when all good things happen in the crate your dog will welcome it. If you follow these directions, not only will your dog become housebroken much faster with much less frustration and less messy cleanups, but they will also learn the house rules much faster. This will evolve to your dog paying attention to you more. Observe how your bond with your dog gets tighter as time goes on.

More Questions for Andrea?

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