

Bridge Rescue for Dogs, Inc.

Crate Training Protocol Recommendations

Have at least two Kongs. Fill the Kongs with either peanut butter or cream cheese (we like cream cheese better only because it is a little less messy but peanut butter works great too). Here is the most important thing to do -- FREEZE the Kong before giving it to the dog. The dog will have to work for at least an hour at getting to goodies out and by that time it will tire out. Be sure to smear a little bit of UNFROZEN food on the outside of the Kong the very first time you give it to the dog, so she/he realizes there are goodies inside. Rotate the two Kongs so you always have a frozen one handy.

For the first two days, do NOT lock the dog in the crate at all. Let the dog go in & out freely. Toss toys in the crate for the dog to play with. Tell the dog she/he is a good dog when inside the crate and sits/lays down. Be sure to feed the dog its in the kennel. But do NOT close the door.

On the third day, we will change things up a bit. Start by having the dog in the kennel and close the door for a maximum of 5 minutes. Walk around the home just as you would, doing whatever chores or other activity you would normally do. Then let the dog out. Do not overdo the praise when you let the dog out; simply open the door and ignore the dog. What you CAN do is praise the dog when she is sitting nicely in her crate while the door is closed. But do not make a big deal out of letting her out.

Then, slowly work up to 10 minutes let the dog out, and keep the door open for a while again. Then work up to 15 minutes. Keep progressing in 5 minute intervals. This will take a fair chunk of the day. Once you get up to 30 minutes, give the dog the frozen Kong and let the dog work at it for as long as it takes until she/he loses interest. Then let the dog out of the crate, again with little fanfare, just open the door.

From this point on, ALWAYS leave a frozen Kong with her when she/he is in the crate with the door closed. Do not give the dog the Kong at any other time --- she/he only gets it when in the crate. Keep working on longer periods - 45 minutes, then an hour, an hour and 15 minutes, and so on. But always with a frozen Kong.