



Crate Training



The best tool for training your puppy or grown dog to behave itself indoors is a crate. A crate is simply a plastic or wire box designed to serve as an artificial den for the dog. They may be purchased at most pet stores. Crate training is highly recommended by vets and professional dog trainers for house-training, prevention of behavior problems, and ease of travel.

The Best Size for a Brittany's is: Midwest Crate, Life Stages Model 1630: 30"L X 21"w X 24"H



Crate training is the easiest way to house-train your puppy/dog. Crates are also used to prevent destructive chewing by puppies during the teething stage or by untrained dogs suffering from anxiety and/or excess energy. Crates provide a time-out area for over-excited dogs and a space they can call their own when they crave peace and quiet. Crates have the added advantage of providing a traveling home for your dog, allowing you to more easily take the dog along on trips. As long as it has its crate, the dog feels secure and "at home."

Here's why crate training works:

Wolves and dogs in the wild live in dens for shelter. They have a natural instinct to keep their dens clean and therefore they go outside to urinate and defecate. Domestic dogs have the same instincts; they like to curl up under beds or desks or other small spaces because this makes them feel more safe and secure. Every dog can benefit from a crate -- a place of its own.

The right size:

The grown dog needs to be able to stand up and turn around in the crate, and the crate should be about the same length of the dog when he is lying down. For most Brittanys, this will be about a Medium to Large size crate or a #300 or #400 depending upon your dog's height. Buy an adult size crate for a puppy, but use a space divider because if the crate is too large, instead of keeping it clean, the puppy may eliminate in one end.

Where to place it:

The crate should be placed where the dog can be close to the family, but not in the middle of commotion. The best places are usually the bedroom, so that the dog can enjoy being near to you while sleeping, or a quiet corner in the den.

Introductions are important:

Make the crate a comfortable bed with a blanket or pad. Lure the dog in with toys or a treat, (but don't feed and water in the crate). Praise it whenever s/he enters its crate. When s/he seems comfortable going into the crate with the door open, give it a rawhide bone or Nylabone to chew and close the door for a few minutes only. Stay in the room, going about your business. At the first sign of protest, such as barking or howling, intervene with a sharply raised voice or a shaker can (a tin can with coins inside). Release the puppy/dog while s/he is being quiet and do not praise or make a fuss over it when it comes out, so as not to reinforce the pleasure of the release. Gradually lengthen the time s/he stays out and gradually begin leaving the room for a few minutes at a time.

House-training with a crate:

Feed, water, and walk the dog. If business gets taken care of on the walk, let the dog stay out for the length of time it can be expected to stay clean (15 min for puppies, an hour for adults). After playtime, crate the dog until the next walk or trip outside. When you take it out, take it straight outside, on leash. As s/he takes care of business, use a cue word so that later when s/he is trained, s/he will perform on command and praise it the second s/he's done. If the dog has an accident outside of the crate, scold and take it outside, using your cue word to communicate what it is supposed to do there. As training progresses, lengthen the time the dog spends out of the crate, but always leave the door open so the dog can retreat to the crate whenever he/she wants to rest undisturbed.

Chewing Prevention:

An untrained dog loose in the house can wreak havoc. When you can monitor the dog and she/he starts to chew something forbidden, scold and remove. Then hand it an acceptable dog chew and praise it. When you are busy or out of the house, the dog can be safely crated for up to three hours. It will happily nap and not have a chance to destroy your possessions when you are not there to correct it.

Traveling:

If the crate will fit in your vehicle, it will prevent your dog from landing in your lap when you hit the brakes or from jumping on you because it sees a cat, or is panicked by a burst of thunder. Even if the crate won't fit in your car, a folding crate is a great thing to travel without may get you into hotels that otherwise don't accept dogs; it offers you the security of knowing you can go out to dinner without returning to find all the pillows chewed. As you go from place to place, your dog will feel at home as long as it has its crate.

A Final Word:

Do Not Use the Crate as Punishment!!!!

Although a rambunctious puppy can certainly be put in its crate for a time-out, keep in mind that this is supposed to be a haven for your dog and never use prolonged confinement in the crate to frighten or hurt your dog.

Warning: If using a wire crate remove collar/tags to prevent entanglement.

Don't misuse the crate by over-using it! Leaving the dog crated for longer than 3 hours is too hard on the dog. Also, some older dogs cannot tolerate confinement and will not adapt to a crate. If you give it a fair try with one of these seniors and it doesn't work, don't force the issue.