

## CRATE TRAINING

As part of agility, your dog will need to learn to go readily into his crate and stay there calmly. This is hard for many dogs. You can help this along by using your clicker skills to help the dog learn that calmness is expected.

### Going into the crate calmly:

1. Put your dog on leash.
2. Get a lot of really popular treats ready.
3. Bring your dog near the crate and click/treat for looking at the crate.
4. Walk the dog away from the crate, ask for something easy, and c/t. Repeat that cycle until the dog is relaxed and paying close attention. At this point you may want to take off the leash. Your choice.
5. Walk the dog back near the crate and click for being near the crate. Drop the treat right in front of the crate, and repeat that cycle a few times.
6. Toss a treat right into the back of the crate and click if your dog puts his head into the crate. If the dog turns back to you, give him a different treat. If the dog goes all the way in to get his treat, great, click while he's still in there and toss the treat over his head all the way to the back (this takes practice, don't hesitate to toss a few extras in—nothing wrong with a jackpot!).
7. Call the dog out of the crate (if he's still in there), walk him away, ask for something easy, and c/t.
8. Take the dog back to the crate and wait patiently. The dog will probably check the crate for leftover treats. Be ready! Click and treat—with that treat flying over his head into the back of the crate. Repeat the cycle until the dog is diving into the crate for the treats.
9. Now, wait a few seconds before clicking and treating while the dog is in the crate.
10. If your dog is calm and enjoying the game, you can continue. Otherwise, stop at this stage until your dog thinks the crate is a pretty good predictor of treats.
11. Once your dog is checking out the crate without encouragement, just to see if maybe something's in there, you can go on to rewarding calmness while STAYING in the crate.

### Staying calm in the crate:

1. Once your dog is going into the crate calmly, you can try shutting the door for a moment. This is tricky. Try to do it really fast, so that your dog is still rooting around in the back for the treat while you shut the door for about one second. Then open it and toss a treat over the dog's head into the back. (You probably won't be able to click, too, but if you can, or if you have a helper, great.) Repeat that until the dog is calm when you close the door for a second or two.
2. Put the crate somewhere where it's convenient to you. Next to the TV chair, next to the computer, whatever. Put the dog in the crate, grab your clicker, put the treats handy, and wait. Every time your dog is calm in the crate (NO WHINING!), click and treat. Drop that treat in without opening the crate. At first, you want the closed-crate session to last one or two minutes; eventually you should be able to watch an entire TV movie with just a few treats.
3. While your dog may be calm in the crate at home, calm in the crate during class is a totally different experience! Be prepared to stand next to your dog's crate and c/t during class, too. You may want to bring a bone or special chew toy that is only for class to leave in the crate.