Emery-n-Denise’s Guide On
Crate Training Golden Retriever Puppies

Many people have misunderstood the purpose and practical uses of crate training Golden Retriever puppies, having the false impression that dog crates are cruel or a maltreatment of puppies, and consequently they will not utilize them.

In reality however, crate training and the use of a crate for your puppy’s abode within your home is just about the safest and most relaxed place you can provide for your Golden Retriever. This compliments a Golden Retriever’s normal instincts to be able to secure itself inside a den or sheltered area. As far as type and size of crates go, we recommend the 42- or 48-inch size, but you will either have to buy one that has an adjustable center divider so that the puppy can grow into it, or improvise a divider panel yourself using wood paneling and zip ties to fix it in place inside the crate (this requires cutting and fitting of the panel but it’s fairly simple if you have some hand tools). You will want to adjust the length of the crate so that the space where your puppy stays does not allow them to potty at one end and sleep at the other. By making one end of the crate smaller where the puppy stays, it will teach the puppy to hold their bowels until you take them outside to go potty.

As a puppy, your Golden needs to be supervised continually, which means you really can’t take your eyes off them for any length of time because they will get into things in your home that could be hurtful to them and frustrating to you. As soon as your Golden puppy begins to accept the crate as a place of retreat to feel safe in, you can place them inside during daytime hours with the door closed to allow you time to get things done that might otherwise jeopardize the safety of your puppy. So, when you are unable to fully devote your attention to your puppy, a crate is very useful for short periods of time. As your puppy matures into an adult, necessary crate time for its protection will be far less required. You will find after working with and training your Golden, the need to constantly give it your undivided attention will become much less of a requirement.

IMPORTANT NOTE: DO NOT ALLOW YOUR PUPPY TO WEAR ITS COLLAR, OR HAVE CHEW TOYS OR TREATS WHILE IT IS INSIDE THE CRATE WITH THE DOOR CLOSED.

We highly recommend getting the heavy duty steel crate (7 to 8.5 gauge for the main vertical wires, with spacing not more than 1-1/4-inch apart). Most crates have a plastic tray for the bottom floor which can slide out for easy cleaning. However, some manufacturers use a very light-weight plastic tray which may break or crack after a year or so, and some use a much heavier tray that will withstand many years of use. Some even have a painted metal tray but the paint on a metal tray tends to chip away over time which allows the exposed metal to rust. Some crates come with multiple doors, such as one on the end and one on the side. We recommend getting a crate with only one door because doors tend to weaken the structural integrity of the crate due to the hinges and latching mechanisms. This ultimately results in a crate that doesn’t last as long. When a cheaply made crate begins to break down, the wires become detached from their cross pieces, and this can be a hazard for your dog. As one might expect, a crate that costs substantially less will probably last a year or so, while a more expensive crate will probably last 5 to 10 years depending on the gauge and finish of the wires, and the type of floor tray. It also depends on the temperament of your Golden, and whether or not you allow it to become frustrated while they are kept inside the crate. Although Golden Retrievers are not aggressive animals by any means, they do not like to be caged for long periods of time and will become destructive to try and free themselves. This can also result in your Golden puppy hurting itself by trying to chew the wires loose.

When you get your new puppy and bring it home for the first time, we suggest you have your dog crate already there, located in the spot where you would like it to remain. It is advisable to locate the crate where
there is not a great deal of activity. Many crate users are inclined to have it in the kitchen or other room which has a door to the outside of your home. The intent is that the puppy will get use to the idea that every time it comes out of the crate, you take it out that same door to go potty. With training, your Golden will begin to go to the door of your home on its own when it wants to go potty.

As soon as you bring the puppy to your home, let them start trying to find the crate on their own. Leave the entranceway into the crate open, allowing the young puppy to wander in and out of it. You may also put a toy or even a doggy treat in the dog crate, giving your puppy extra inducement to go in. The moment your puppy moves inside the crate, compliment them so that they grasp the idea that he or she is doing the correct thing, leaving the door to the crate open. We strongly advise not to allow the puppy to be unsupervised with a treat or chew toy while it is either in or outside of its crate. When your Golden remains in its crate on its own without excessive coaxing or a closed crate door, compliment them for doing this. When your puppy starts acquiring the behavior of going into the crate on its own accord, you might want to put a fresh squeaky toy or snack inside for them to enjoy with the crate door open and your supervision, but not without your supervision.

Assuming you have your crate situated so that it is always available to your puppy, your Golden will begin to visit it whenever he or she gets fatigued or perhaps when they are feeling a little bewildered. Even though Golden Retrievers usually appreciate crates, you don’t want to use the crate excessively by making him or her spend long daytime hours in one, especially after being in it all night where it has slept. If it sleeps in the crate all night, and then stays in it most of the day while the family is working or at school, then it becomes more of a cage rather than an abode or a den for its retreat. This will cause your puppy to become frustrated with the crate, and we do not recommend one to be used in these situations.

While you are training your Golden to become familiar with and accept its crate, patience and compassion are key for you to be successful with the training. When you have to keep the puppy in the crate with the door closed, you have to be strong and learn not to let them out if he or she begins barking or crying, as this will only teach them that they should bark and cry when they want to come out. This defeats the purpose of peace for both you and your Golden. It will take a little time to establish this understanding with your puppy. If the puppy begins to whine, speak gently and encouragingly to it, and perhaps put your fingers through the crate allowing the pup to mouth your fingers. Even so, you should not take your puppy out while it is whining or crying – instead allow them to relax inside the crate first for several minutes. The crate is not a place for punishment, nor is it a place to leave your Golden while the family relaxes in an activity such as watching TV. Your Golden desperately wants to be a part of your family and we encourage you to allow him or her to spend relaxation time with the family, always making crate access available to them. But nothing can be more fulfilling to your Golden than to be next to you while you relax.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** USING THE CRATE FOR YOUR PUPPY’S SLEEPING QUARTERS IS PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE, BUT ONCE YOU CLOSE THE CRATE DOOR AND INTEND ON LEAVING THE ROOM, MAKE SURE YOUR PUPPY IS NOT WEARING A COLLAR AND THERE ARE NO TREATS OR CHEW TOYS INSIDE THE CRATE.

Although it may take a little time, crate training is perfect for your new Golden Retriever. You can utilize the dog crate for times when you have to depart from your home, times when you have family or guests over, or whenever your Golden has a condition such as sickness or diarrhea. But always remember to give your Golden quality play time each day and much of affection with you and your family. In doing so no one will love you more and be more loyal to you than your Golden Retriever – we promise! If you avoid using the crate for penalties, your Golden Retriever puppy will certainly catch on in the crate training process very quickly. Working with and training your puppy with a little bit of patience and an abundance of love will achieve great satisfaction and rewarding experiences for both you and your Golden.