

TEACHING YOUR PET HOW TO BE CONFINED

Having a safe and secure place for your pet can be reassuring. Keep in mind that confinement should not be problematic once a pet learns that it is safe and secure. But until the pet is comfortable being confined, he may resist. Therefore, it is important to slowly teach your pet how to be confined and relaxed at the same time.

1. Find a location where you wish to confine your pet when he should not be present in a given situation.
 - a. This can be a bedroom, laundry room, crate, or kennel, but should be someplace that can be securely closed and locked.
2. Place the pet in the area with a distraction such as a food stuffed toy, a feeder toy, or catnip.
 - a. If the pet is to be put in a crate and has not been in one before, you may need to leave the door open or take off the top to make it more acceptable.
 - b. A family member should also be present but engaged in another task such as reading a book and not interacting with the pet.
3. Stay with the pet in the area for a predetermined amount of time. A good starting point may be between 2 and 10 minutes.
 - a. If the pet is calm and quiet at the end of the allotted time, the pet can be released.
4. If the pet is unable to be calm and quiet, you must first work on teaching how to settle and relax on a verbal command. See handout on Tranquility Training Exercises.
5. Gradually increase the amount of time the pet is in the location, but always intersperse short confinement times with longer ones.
6. Once the pet is doing well with a family member present, the family member can step outside briefly and then return.
 - a. It is important to ignore the pet upon return and calmly sit down.
7. Gradually increase the amount of time outside the room, but again, always intersperse short departures with longer ones.
8. Always provide a distraction such as a food stuffed toy.
9. Try to avoid letting the pet out when he is barking, meowing, whining, crying, or scratching; an exception should be made if the pet is in a state of extreme panic.