**Cheat Sheet 2.1**

**Crate Training**

Crate training takes advantage of your dog's natural instincts as a den animal. A wild dog's den is their home—a place to sleep, hide from danger and raise a family. The crate becomes your dog's den, or bedroom, where they can find safety and reassurance while you know they’re safe and secure (and not shredding your house while you're out running errands).

The primary use for a crate is housetraining, because dogs don't naturally soil their sleeping areas. The crate can limit access to the rest of the house while they learn other rules, like not to chew on furniture. Crates are also a safe way to transport your dog in the car.

Crating Warning: A crate is not a magical solution to common canine behaviour. If not used correctly, a dog can feel trapped and frustrated. These are my crating Golden Rules:

* Never use the crate as a punishment. Your dog will come to fear it and refuse to enter.
* Don't leave your dog in the crate too long. A dog that’s crated all day and night doesn't get enough exercise or human interaction and can become depressed or anxious. You may have to change your schedule, hire a pet sitter or take your dog to a daycare facility to reduce the amount of time they spend in their crate each day. Speak to your trainer for advice on timings, it is not a hard and fast thing.
* Lock your dog’s crate only until you can trust them not to destroy the house. After that, it should be a place they go voluntarily.

The training process

Crate training can take days or weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament and past experiences. It's important to keep two things in mind while crate training: The crate should always be associated with something pleasant and training should take place in a series of small steps. Don't go too fast.

Place the crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time, such as the family room. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Take the door off and let the dog explore the crate at their leisure. Some dogs will be naturally curious and start sleeping in the crate right away. If yours isn't one of them:

* Bring them over to the crate and talk to them in a happy tone of voice. Make sure the crate door is open and secured so that it won't hit your dog and frighten them.
* Encourage your dog to enter the crate by dropping some small food treats nearby, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. If they refuse to go all the way in at first, that's OK; don't force them to enter. Continue tossing treats into the crate until your dog will walk calmly all the way into the crate to get the food. If they aren’t interested in treats, try tossing a favourite toy in the crate. This step may take a few minutes or as long as several days.
* Feed your dog meals in the crate – this is not always necessary but can help to strengthen the positive association in a crate. In a multi-dog household this can be a life saver.
* Shut the crate door in increments – seconds to begin with. If they begin to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly – cut it down. Next time, try leaving them in the crate for a shorter time period. If they do whine or cry in the crate, don’t let them out until they stop. Otherwise, they'll learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine, so they'll keep doing it.
* After your dog is eating their regular meals in the crate with no sign of fear or anxiety, you can confine them there for short time periods while you're home. Once your dog will stay quietly in the crate for about 30 minutes with you mostly out of sight, you can begin leaving them crated when you're gone for short time periods and/or letting them sleep there at night.

Crating whilst you are out.

* You can give a SAFE toy, or smear of peanut butter on the bars to distract him as you leave. Vary the moment during your "getting ready to leave" routine that you put your dog in the crate. You could crate them five to 20 minutes prior to leaving.
* Don't make your departures emotional and prolonged—they should be matter-of-fact.
* When you return home, don't reward your dog for excited behaviour by responding to them in an enthusiastic way, keep arrivals low-key. Continue to crate your dog for short periods from time to time when you're home so they doesn't associate crating with being left alone.

Crating your dog at night

* Put your dog in the crate using your regular routine. Puppies may already be used to a crate if you are lucky, but you can put a microwavable hot item in there, or I have heard of a ticking clock wrapped in a warmed blanket being reassuring to puppies.
* Puppies often need to go outside to eliminate during the night, so to speed up housetraining you can get up once in the night, but be dispassionate with your puppy – it is not playtime at 3am!

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* Potential problems
* Whining. If your dog whines or cries while in the crate at night, it may be difficult to decide whether they’re whining to be let out of the crate, or whether they need to be let outside to eliminate. I tend to have a “wait it out” policy, as long as you don’t think they need to potty. If your dog is just testing you, they'll probably stop whining soon, but be aware it may get worse before it gets better. I know it’s hard during this time but yelling at them or pounding on the crate will only make things worse!
* A trick to help you decide is if the whining continues after you've ignored them for several minutes, use the phrase they associate with going outside to eliminate. If they respond and become excited, take them outside. If not, don't give in; if you do, you'll teach your dog to whine loud and long to get what they want. If you've progressed gradually through the training steps and haven't done too much too fast, you'll be less likely to encounter this problem. If the problem becomes unmanageable, you may need to start the crate training process over again.