**Houston Pets Alive! recommends these tips for crate training a puppy:**

1. **Introduce it casually**
The worst way you can introduce your puppy to the idea of a crate is to bring it home and lock him inside it immediately. People don’t like being trapped against their will, and neither do dogs. Instead, you should initially treat the crate like it’s just another piece of furniture — but one that he can enjoy.

To this end, place it in a part of the house that he frequents, add a blanket and a toy or two, and keep the door open. Then back off and give him a chance to explore it. Some dogs will immediately start sniffing around and going into the crate, which is a great sign. If your puppy isn’t quite so bold, encourage him to check it out by placing favorite foods and toys near and inside the crate. The ultimate goal is to get him comfortable with going inside, and this is something that could take days. Be patient with the process.
2. **Use it for meal time**
After she’s willing to enter the crate, your next goal is to get her comfortable with staying inside for extended lengths of time. One of the best ways to do this (and create a positive association with the crate) is to start putting her food in the crate.

If possible, you want to place the food at the back of the crate so that your dog goes all the way in. Some dogs may not be willing to do this, though, so you can start with the food just inside the crate and slowly move it back with successive meals.
3. **Close the crate**
As soon as your dog is eating his meals while standing all the way inside the crate, it’s time to close the door. After he’s done eating that first time, open the door immediately. You’ll leave him in longer and longer with each meal, adding just a few minutes every time.

It’s possible that your dog may whine. If this happens, open the crate immediately and don’t leave him in as long next time. However, if he whines again, wait until he stops before letting him out or you will teach him that whining equals open door.
4. **Extend crate time**
Once your dog is hanging out in her closed crate without signs of stress, it’s time to lengthen her stay. Use a favorite toy or treat to encourage her to enter the crate, then close it. Hang out by the crate for several minutes, then go into a different room for a few minutes so she gets used to the idea of staying in the crate alone. When you return, don’t open the crate immediately. Instead, sit with her again for a few more minutes and then open the door.

Keep increasing the time as you do this until your dog is able to stay in the locked crate for half an hour without your presence. When she’s able to do this, she’s ready for you to leave her for short periods and possibly even sleep in the closed crate overnight. Make sure you keep the crate relatively nearby for overnight stays though. Puppies usually need to go to the bathroom overnight and you’ll want to be able to let her out.
5. **Leaving and returning**
The key here is to make crating seem completely normal and avoid excitement. Encourage him to get into the crate and praise him when he does so, but keep it brief. When you come home, stay low-key and ignore any excited behavior that he shows.

**Houston Pets Alive! recommends these tips for crate training an adult dog:**

**Get them ready**
Before you begin crate training, always exercise your dog with a long walk to drain excess energy. Additionally, you want to take him outside to go to the bathroom, so you don’t have to interrupt your training for a “potty break.”

**Have patience**
Unlike with puppies, which don’t have habits they’ve been forming for their entire lives, adult dogs may have spent years without ever entering a crate. This means they’re probably going to be a lot more resistant to the idea and may fight against it more. Your job is to bear with them and keep trying. Over time, most adult dogs will come to accept a crate with the right training.

**Use treats**
Your goal is to make your dog associate the crate with positive feelings, so encourage her to go to the crate by putting treats and even food inside. Eventually she’ll see the crate as the place where good things happen and won’t be as fearful.

**Make it comfy**
Dogs love it when they can find a nice, comfortable place to sit or lie down, so one of the best things you can do is to treat your dog’s crate like it’s just another resting place. Place a favorite blanket inside or buy a new one and leave the door open, so he can come and go as he pleases.

**Close the door — briefly!**
Obviously, the eventual goal with the crate is to be able to close the door and still have your dog keep calm. Once you get to the point where your pooch seems comfortable hanging out in the open crate, offer some kind of distraction (perhaps a toy or treat) and close the door while she is engaged.

Start with intervals of five minutes or less and make sure you stay close by and visible. Gradually keep it closed for longer periods and leave the room so your dog can come to understand that she is still safe — and will eventually get out — even if you’re not right there in front of her.

Keep it up with these methods and most adult dogs will eventually come to accept a crate willingly. You may even discover that it becomes your dog’s new favorite place to sleep!