**Crate Training Your Maltese**

Crate training, whether a wire or plastic type, will give your pup a den in which they can rest in, a safe haven. Never use it as punishment for bad behavior. Being next to your bed at night in their crate, to hear you breathing, will be a calming effect. At first, most will try to manipulate the situation, but you have to set the ground rules from the very start. At bed time, place a light sheet over the crate, and it will become a signal in the future that it is bedtime. Placing them on the bed to sleep with you is very dangerous. They are like infants, if you put them at the edge of a cliff, they will crawl right off. With a puppy in bed, you will not get a good night’s rest.

Crating your dog is a practice to continue into adulthood as a dog likes a place of their own. Give them a special treat or toy that they get only when they go in their crate to make it a pleasant experience. Many older dogs will choose to go in their crate to rest even when the door is left open and they can come and go as they please. When training a youngster, make sure you take them out to potty often so they do not have to eliminate in this environment.

Leave you pup for short times during the day, even if it is just to take a walk around the block. The nature of a Maltese is one that when they become bonded to their owner and family, their sole reason in life is to be with them. You want to avoid separation anxiety, which over time will occur if they do not have some time left alone. For example, if you become ill and hospitalized, you will have to leave your Maltese. Practice leaving the house and upon returning, do not run to your dog and use excited phrases such as how is my little sweetheart or my poor baby being left all alone, etc. Wait a minute or two, put your jacket away, talking to them calmly and then go to your pup. Immediately take them to the place you have chosen for them to eliminate. This will make the pup calm and avoid separation anxiety in the future. You must stop any bad behavior and teach them what is and what is not acceptable from the very beginning.

Your job is to avoid accidents in the house at all costs. If you cannot watch your pup, place them in their crate. They can chew dangerous electrical cords or other dangerous items quicker than you can imagine. If you see your pup start to sniff or circle, and an accident does occur, wrap up a newspaper and hit yourself on the head with it. You have just set yourself back two steps in training. Immediately clean up the mess and take it to where you want them to go and use a word you have chosen, such as outside. When they begin to go where they are supposed to go, let them finish before you start saying what a great dog! Once the deed is done, praise them as if they just won a 5 point major.

Once fully vaccinated, they do so enjoy taking walk and exploring their environment, broadening their horizons. Do not push your dog when getting them use to a leash or harness. If they want to just stand there for a week or so, and not walk, let them. A family member or friend can wait with a treat at the opposite end of the driveway to help begin the walking process. Ignore ridiculous behavior, and praise them when they act appropriately. People you never knew will stop and greet your dog and then you. They are great ambassadors of the breed, and you will be socializing them at the same time. They will become a mentally well-balanced member of your family. Be very aware of your surroundings to protect them against stray dogs, large birds of prey and little children that may become over exuberant.

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