





Day 1



Day 2



Day 3

Hiding Boxes



If they don't have a box –
they do their best to hide





Hide Panel



- Visual barriers between cages



Make Other Adjustments

- Noise reduction
 - radio – moved, off, turned down, station changed
 - staff quieter – no slamming, yelling, etc.
- Night-time light reduction



- Cats feel more secure when they can survey their surroundings from a high place.
- Add a perch for the cat to get up higher
- Move stressed cats to higher cages



- Cats spend a large portion of their day either resting or sleeping so it is important to provide them with comfortable surfaces.





Hammocks



Familiarity

Unfamiliarity is stressful to cats

- different caretakers every day
- being moved from cage to cage daily
- removing all items that smell familiar from the cage everyday.

Spot-clean when you can!

- Don't clean the entire cage - taking away everything that smells like the cat - just take out the soiled items.
- If your protocol is to clean the entire cage every day (replacing towels etc.), provide a rubbing cloth on the front of the cage that will stay with the cat.

Rubbing Cloth



Predictable Schedules

- Cats do not like unpredictability – please stick with the same routine for:
 - Feeding time
 - Play time
 - Petting time
 - Enrichment/special treat time
 - Chaotic time (cleaning, noise)



Synthetic Feline Facial Pheromone



Has a calming effect on most cats

- Plug-in diffusers emit the pheromone into the environment on a constant basis – but if the room is too large every cat may not benefit from it.
- Spray – walk through 2 times a day and look for stressed cats – spray feliway on a cloth and then put the cloth inside the cage with the cat.



Music

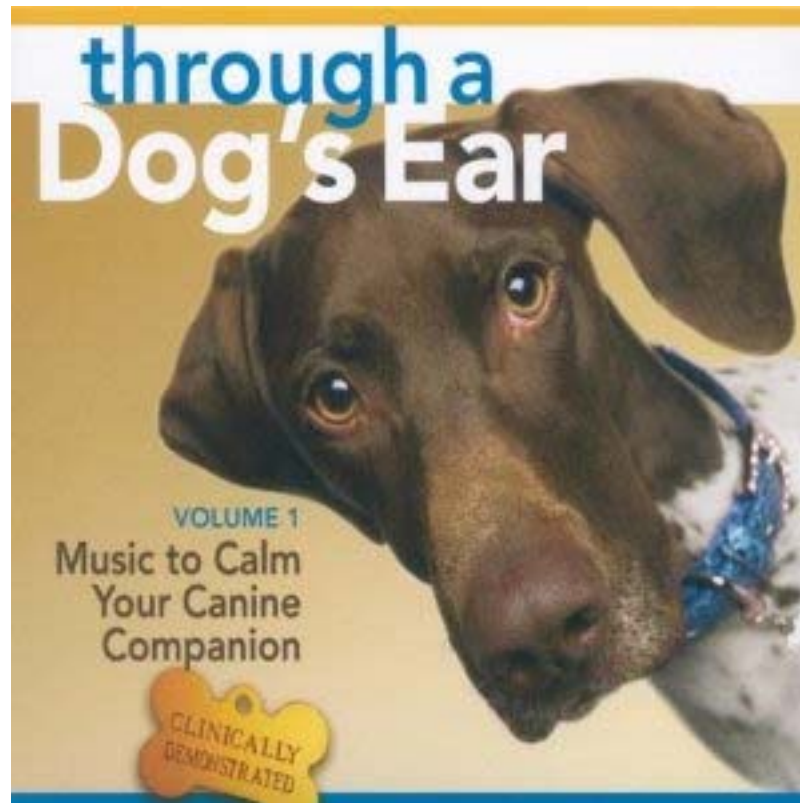


- Soft, soothing music has been shown to have a calming affect on animals
- Radios on during the day can prevent the cats from being startled by sudden noises
- Stations with human conversation can help habituate the cats to unfamiliar human voices.

National Public Radio

Through a Dog's Ear CD

Psycho-acoustically designed music



Human Companionship



Calm interactions can go a long way to help a cat adjust to the shelter

Social interaction with humans



Cuddle time



Play time

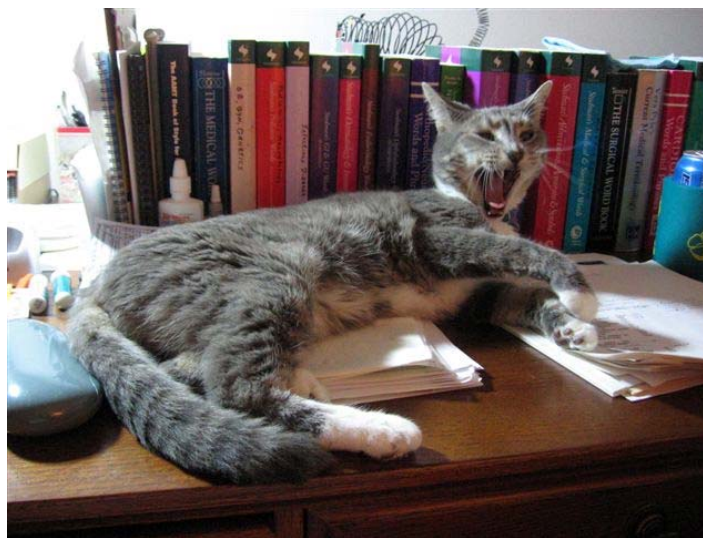


They want OUT!



I don't mean this!





Handling cats to reduce stress

- Cats are control freaks – they have a fundamental need to control their environment and their choices.
- Cats are not good at dealing with stress – they are good at avoiding it (flight).
- They do not like to be picked up and held because it takes away their option to flee

Handling Cats

- Always use the minimum amount of force/restraint necessary
- Rough handling and extreme physical restraint are counterproductive
- For really scared cats or fractious cats ~ use maximum restraint ~ restrict all body movements using a towel wrap.

Towel wraps

- Goal is that the cat struggles less and remains calm



Stress Reduction Procedures

- Provide a hiding place
- Provide a high place to be
- Allow them a familiar scent
- Maintain predicable schedules
- Help provide for normal sleep cycles
- Provide a comfortable place to rest
- Pheromones therapy - Feliway®
- Soft soothing music - low volume
- Human companionship
- Get them out of the cage when you can
- Handle them with care and compassion

How long is too long to stay?

- We need to assess the cat's psychological wellbeing in the environment.
- We need to **PAY ATTENTION**.
- We **NEED** to be **HUMANE**!
Remember chronic stress is the worst kind of stress. It damages the body and the mind.

Behavioral Deterioration

- Much easier to see in dogs because dogs often express themselves outwardly.

For cats look for:

- not eating for a length of time
- not grooming (or excessive grooming)
- constant hiding
- complete social withdrawal
- lethargy and depression

Make sound, humane decisions

- Think about the cat's quality of life **RIGHT NOW!**
- Not what it could be if ever there was an adopter willing to take a chance.
- Remember – cats live in the moment. They have no idea a brighter future might be in front of them. They only know today and how they feel day after day.

AND - keep them mentally stimulated



Enrichment



What do I mean by Enrichment?

Providing an interesting, complex, challenging, stimulating, and variable environment that encourages the animals to explore, think, learn, engage, and be well – mentally and physically.

Environmental Enrichment

Modifying the environment so that it:

- is more comfortable
- provides more space (larger enclosure, etc.)
- provides more choices (different levels, etc.)
- is more stimulating (views, stimulating the senses, etc.)

Behavioral Enrichment

Stimulating the brain by:

- giving the animal opportunities to perform species-typical behaviors.
- giving the animal opportunities to think and learn.

Environmental Enrichment



wouldn't that be nice here?

Comfortable Environment

- Soft bedding
- Platforms
- Hammocks



More Space - More Choices



Certainly needed here

More space



port holes cut between two cages

The choice to perch



The choice to hide



Utilizing the vertical space = more usable space and more choices



More space and more choices



The Senses

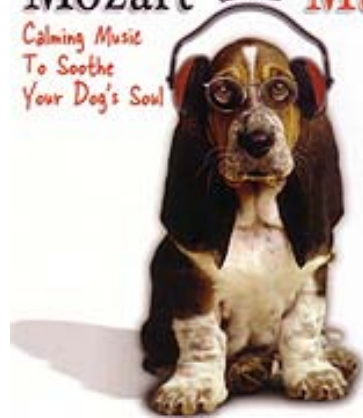
We should consider all the senses when we develop enrichment strategies for shelter animals.



Auditory Stimulation

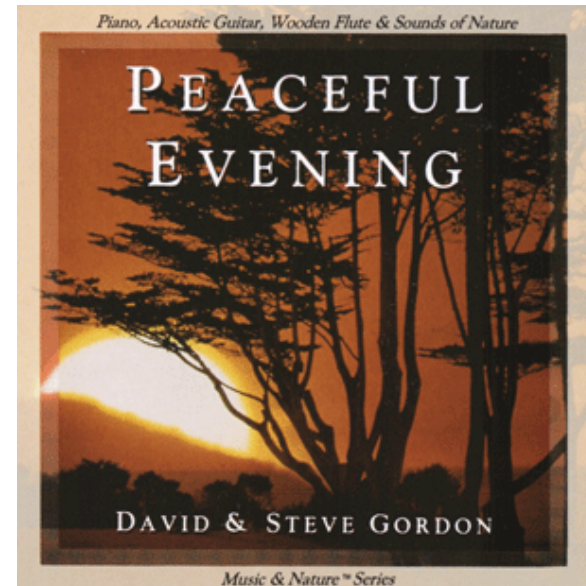
Mozart For Mutts

Calming Music
To Soothe
Your Dog's Soul

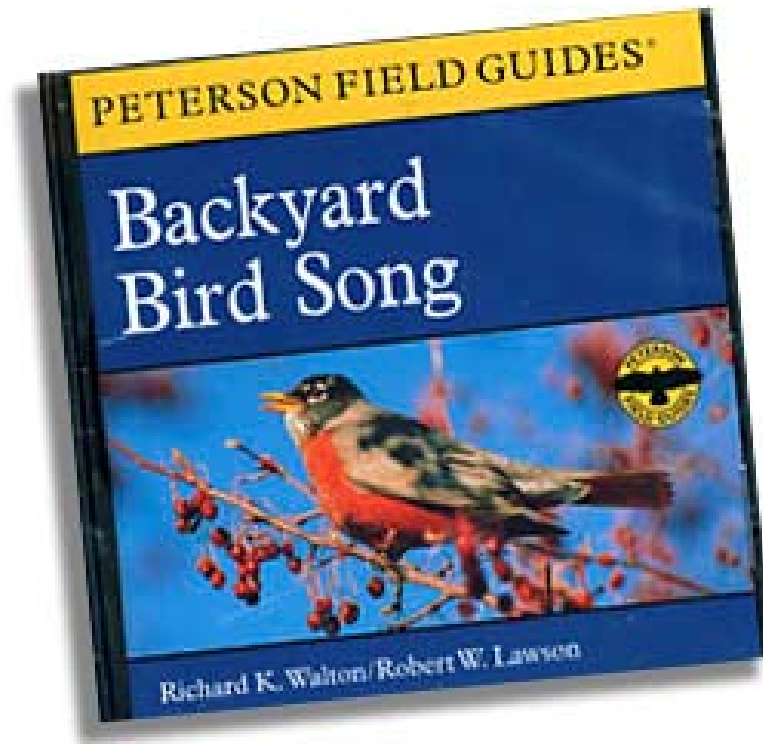


Research has found that classical music calms shelter dogs (Wells et. al. 2002)

New Age Music



Auditory Stimulation for cats





Wind chimes



Olfactory stimulation in the zoo



Fish oil dabbed around environment



A room with a view



Bird feeders outside the window



Aquariums in the cat rooms



Bubbles!



Moving things outside the cage



Fishing pole toy



Disk Shooter Toy



Perpetual motion toys





Behavioral Enrichment

- Providing opportunities for the animals to think and learn
- Providing opportunities for the animals to perform species typical behaviors

Opportunities to perform species-typical behavior

Cats **NEED** to scratch – it's normal feline behavior



Provide scratching boards inside the cages



All animals like to play



Opportunities to play in the cage





Variety is important

Replace the toys regularly so they are novel. Cats habituate to toys very quickly.



Fun with paper



Corn husks and fleece strips



Interactive play



Opportunities to “get high” Catnip



Catnip



Grow some fresh



Outdoor enclosures



They want OUT!



They NEED out!



To stretch, play



And get some exercise



4 on the floor program

All cats should get out of their cages at least twice a week – to stretch, move around, scratch, play



Cats are social animals

Dogs and humans are a *social obligate* species
~ they **NEED** social companionship to be
emotionally healthy

Cats are a *solitary survival* species but they
also live in social groups ~ social
companionship is important to them too.

Social interactions with other cats



Group Housing

Group Housing Precautions

- Do not overcrowd the space
- Monitor group for mismatched personalities
 - shy, timid cats may be intimidated and stressed
 - bold, dominant cats may be bullying others
- Make sure there is easy access to feeding and elimination areas and that there are enough of each. Spread the resources around the enclosure.

Utilize the vertical space to provide plenty of hiding and perching areas



Human social contact is **VERY** important too.



Petting, brushing, play, quiet time together

Providing opportunities for the animals to think and learn



Food Acquisition Challenges



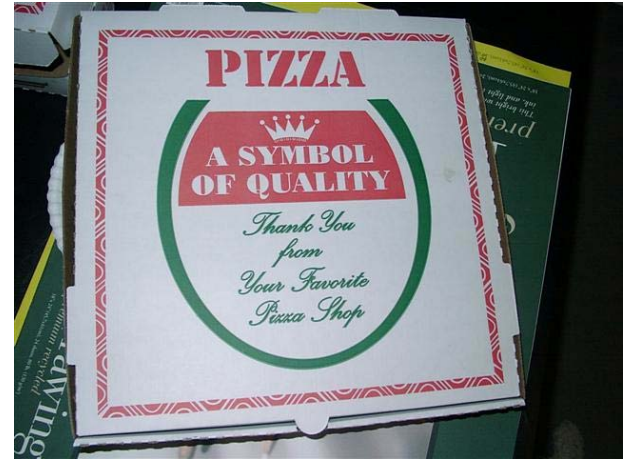
Feeder Balls



Cat Kongs



Cheap Alternatives



Pizza box puzzle feeder



Egg Carton Feeder Puzzle



Commercially made feeder device



Shelter-made - PVC Pipe Feeder



Commercially available puzzle



Shelter-made puzzle feeder



Dogs aren't the only ones that can use their noses

- Cats are hunters and thus are seekers
- Stimulate their seeking system
- Scatter kibble or treats in the environment for them to seek and find.





Clicker Training

Very effective form of training because its principles are based in science.



Not just for the dogs!!!



Target Training in the zoo



Targeting with the tigers



Target training in the shelter



This simple target game

- Encourages the cats to move about in their cage
- Encourages the cats to interact with a human
- Encourages the cats to think
- Provides the cats with some control (the thing they are lacking most in captivity)

“I can make things happen with my own behavior!”



“Hey, come here with that darn clicker!”

Out of the cage target training

- Allows for some stretch time
- Encourages them to move about in their new environment
- Encourages interaction with humans





Kitty Agility



Make efforts every day:

- To recognize stress in the cats.
- To reduce stress as much as possible for **ALL** of the cats from the very first day.
- To keep all of the cats mentally stimulated and behaviorally healthy during their stay.

- THE END



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