



Anti-Cruelty
Behavior
Team

Enrichment Ideas Using Re-purposed / Donated Items

(adapted from *Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff, Second Edition*, 2013, L. Miller & S. Zawistowski, eds., pp. 547-551, John Wiley & Sons, Ames, Iowa, USA.)

Item	Use	Species	Notes
Aluminum foil	Roll tightly into a ball for battable cat toy. Catnip may be rolled inside	Cats	
Animal scents	Create a scent trail for scent hounds to follow in the exercise area. Dab scent in small-diameter PVC pipe section or cardboard paper towel roll as a "scent tube"	Dogs	Scents are available in garden supply and outdoor supply stores
Bird feeder, squirrel feeder	Install outside exterior windows where pets can see the wildlife	Dogs, Cats	Regularly empty and wash feeder and provide multiple feeder locations simulataneously to reduce transmission of disease among the wild visitors
Books & magazines	Volunteers or staff can spend 15 to 30 minutes reading calmly to animals in their cages to promote relaxation	All	The person should ignore unruly or attention seeking behavior and remain calm and minimally interactive with the pets
Broom or mop handle	String a rope though the hole at the end and tie a push toy to the end of it to create an interactive dog chase-it toy	Dogs	Alternatively, use a horse longe whip with a toy tied to the end
Cardboard egg cartons	Place goodies inside, poke some holes and seal with non-toxic glue for a shreddable feeding puzzle	Dogs, Parrots, Rabbits	
Cardboard milk carton or cereal box	Place dry food/treats inside and poke holes for shreddable feeding puzzle	Dogs	Rinse and remove any plastic rings or bags first. Layer boxes inside each other or poke fewer holes to increase the challenge
Cardboard paper towel or toilet tissue rolls	Place dry food/treats inside and fold ends over for shreddable feeding puzzle	Dogs, Cats, Parrots, Rabbits, Rodents	Nest one inside another to increase the challenge
	Leave open and empty to provide hiding or exploration opportunity	Rodents	
Carpet remnants & lumber scraps	Using a staple gun, sturdy lumber scraps can be covered with pieces of carpet to make cat scratchers. Alternatively, stick strong velcro on the back and secure carpet squares directly to cage walls	Cats	Cut multiple pieces of carpet at once for easy replacement later. Wrap the wood in a study plastic bag before covering with carpet, to keep the wood clean and re-usable. Vinyl-backed carpet runners won't unravel when cut
Chinese food take-out containers	Stuff with shredded paper mixed with treats and small toys and hang in cage	Parrots, Rabbits, Rodents	
Cooking spices (cinnamon, vanilla)	Mix with water in a dilute solution and dab onto paper towel or a toy for olfactory enrichment	Dogs, Cats, Rabbits, Rodents	Can be bought in bulk from warehouse stores. Odor could be strong to animals' keen noses, so must be avoidable or optional for the animal to prevent stress.
Corrugated cardboard	Cut into strips, roll into circles and keep adding consecutive outer rings til the roll is large enough for a cat to sit on and scratch	Cats	
	Strips hung from cage sides or top as climbing, shredding and chewing opportunity	Rabbits, Birds, Rodents	
Cotton t-shirts	Cut into pieces and sew into double-layered sacks filled with small toys, shreddable material and/or treats. Or cut/rip pieces, fill as above, and tie into a knot	Parrots	Most parrots will manipulate, shred and extract the goodies inside. Slowly increase difficulty of extraction of goodies
Fresh, whole fruits and vegetables	Whole frozen carrots, apple slices or bananas as dog chewies and puppy teething toys. Stuff 1/2 frozen banana inside a treat dispenser to make it last longer	Dogs	To ensure a balanced diet, use as a supplement to commerical diets. Remove uneaten fresh food before it spoils. Parrots must not eat apple seeds
	Provide whole and fresh as a feeding supplement for rabbits, rodents and parrots	Rabbits, Rodents, Parrots	
	Using mini-pumpkins or small squash, poke holes and insert berries or other goodies into the hollow center	Parrots	

Item	Use	Species	Notes
Glass jars (wide-mouth) & flower pots (pottery)	Sleeping and play area for small rodents	Rodents	
Golf balls, ping-pong balls	Battable toy	Cats	Not safe for use with dogs
Hairbrushes or scrub brushes	Secure to the wall at cat body-height for cats to rub against. Natural hair bristle brushes can be impregnated with food particles for birds to forage	Cats	Brushes must not contain any cleaning chemicals, paints, varnishes, etc. Cannot be adequately disinfected, so discard rather than re-use
Ice cube trays	Make frozen cubes of diluted broth or kibbles frozen in ice cubes	Dogs	Ice cubes will skate around on the floor so best to use on clean surfaces. Also will leave a puddle in cage if not eaten
Lavender oil	Evidence suggests a calming effect on dogs. Spritz on a bandana to tie around the dog's neck or just outside the kennel, or spray around the kennel itself where it will not be licked	Dogs	May be particularly useful to calm travel-related nausea and anxiety
Log of non-poisonous wood	Scratching material	Cats	To ensure the wood is not poisonous, check aspca.org/pet-care/poison-control
	Chewing opportunity	Rabbits, Rodents	
Mirrors	"Companionship" for lone birds and horses	Birds, Horses	
Packing paper, used office paper	Wad into a ball and stash treats or scents inside	Dogs, Cats, Rodents, Parrots	
Paper bag	Place dry food inside and fold top over for shreadable feeding puzzle	Dogs, Cats, Rabbits, Rodents	Be sure to remove any handles first
	Leave open and empty to provide hiding or exploration opportunity	Cats, Rabbits, Rodents	
Paper plates	Cut into quarters then string a wire through the centers to make a shreadable wreath to hang in parrot or rabbit cages	Parrots, Rabbits	
Plastic bottle caps	Poke hole in center and suspend from a ruler for a "fishing rod" chase-it toy. Fill with canned cat food as a puzzle feeder toy	Cats	Use string and ribbon with caution. Sturdy cord is preferable
Plastic Easter eggs	Fill each half with canned food as a wobbling puzzle feeder	Cats	
Plastic packing strapping	Wiggle it as an interactive cat toy	Cats	Use scissors to round the ends off to elimiate sharp edes
PVC pipe sections	Sleeping and play area for rodents. "Scent tube" for dogs (see above under "Animal scents")	Rodents	PVC pipes are available in many shapes including curves, T's and Y's
Rodent bedding (used)	Place into fabric pillowcase, sock tied at one end, or other cloth bag for scent enrichment. Drag around exercise area to make a scent trail	Dogs, Cats	Avoid soiled litter containing urine or feces. Use only bedding from indoor pet rodents known to be healthy. Some dogs may try to consume the bedding
Shower caddy or small bucket	Stock with small treats or toys and hung outside dog kennels and cat cages with a request for passers-by to give the pet a treat or toy. Good for shy animals and prevention of barrier frustration	Dogs, Cats	Unreachable treats can be frustrating for some pets. Visitors may be asked to carry a treat caddy with them instead
Shower curtain rings	Manipulable, carryable toy	Cats, Rabbits	
	Link together for hanging bird jungle gym or cat toy	Cats, Birds	Not strong enough for use with larger birds and parrots
Shredded office paper	Scatter food inside for foraging, digging, and nest building	Cats, Rabbits, Rodents, Birds	
Towels, blankets, tube socks	Knot small towels and socks or braid strips of towels to make toys. May be wetted and frozen for teething puppies. Hang towel "rope" in cage for parrots for unpredictable perching and shredding	Dogs, Birds	Should be used under supervision - some dogs may try to consume towels and socks
Yardstick or ruler	Tie a thin but sturdy cord to one end and a small toy to the other as an interactive cat chase-it toy	Cats	
Yogurt containers	Glue together with non-toxic glue, poke holes, and place dry food inside to make a cat puzzle feeder or hang as a kitty pinata	Cats	Use string and ribbon with caution. Sturdy cord is preferable.