

Spa Day
for Kitteh

Use Everyday Items to Spoil Your Shelter Cats



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What do a toothbrush, a sock and a paint roller have in common? They can be used to make every day a spa day for the cats at your shelter!

We've got tips and tricks on grooming and relaxation – everything you need to bring kitty comfort and bliss.

The best part? All you'll need for these ideas are simple, inexpensive materials – many of which you probably already have lying around!

We hope these ingenious DIY tips from your colleagues will make life a little easier in your shelter and spark more ideas for creative ways to save!

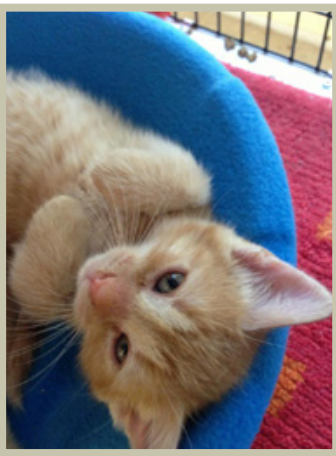


Photo: Tracey Collins, PAWS of Hertford County



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Grooming

Scrub and Dry

Here's a tip that's full of hot air

All spa days should start with a good scrub – and fully drying a kitten after a bath is also important to prevent hypothermia. After ASPCA Kitten Nursery caretakers wash kittens, they blow-dry their fur using a low and warm setting.

P.S. Kittens may need gentle bathing after trying to eat on their own, since they often fall into the food. Learning elimination skills can be another messy, bath-worthy time.



Photo: ASPCA Kitten Nursery

Grooming

Ah, There's the Rub

Get on a roll with this massage technique

What's a spa day without a massage? Wayside Waifs uses paint rollers to calm stressed-out cats. The Kansas City agency finds that most cats take to the rollers immediately and love to rub against them.

Want to give paint-roller massages to your shelter cats? Be sure to use one roller per cat, and disinfect the handle before using with another cat. You can also leave the roller inside the cage as an enrichment toy that carries kitty's scent – Wayside Waifs pokes two holes into the roller and uses twist ties to attach it to the kennel cage at the bottom!



Photos: Joe Orecchio

Grooming

Give Them the Brush

A toothbrush simulates mama cat

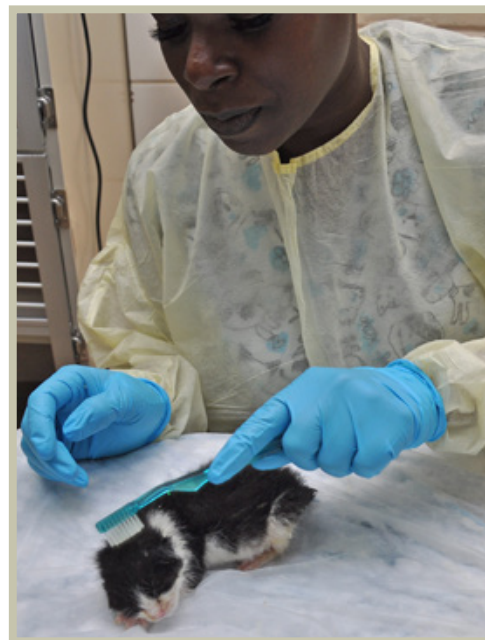
Now that kitteh is dry and relaxed, a good grooming session is in order along with a refreshing drink. At your spa, you'll be swapping a wine glass or tea cup for a baby bottle.



Photos: ASPCA

If you're bottle-feeding itty bitty kitties, the toothbrush acts as a mother cat's tongue – and since mamas typically groom their kittens while they're nursing, the brushing stimulates them to better take the bottle. As an extra enrichment bonus, "Some of them really like it, and roll over to let you do their bellies!" reports ASPCA Nursery Senior manager Lourdes Bravo.

Be sure to use only one toothbrush per litter and discard once kittens are eating on their own. (To tell the tooth, we've never seen a sweeter use for this everyday item!)



Lounging

Dress for Sock-cess

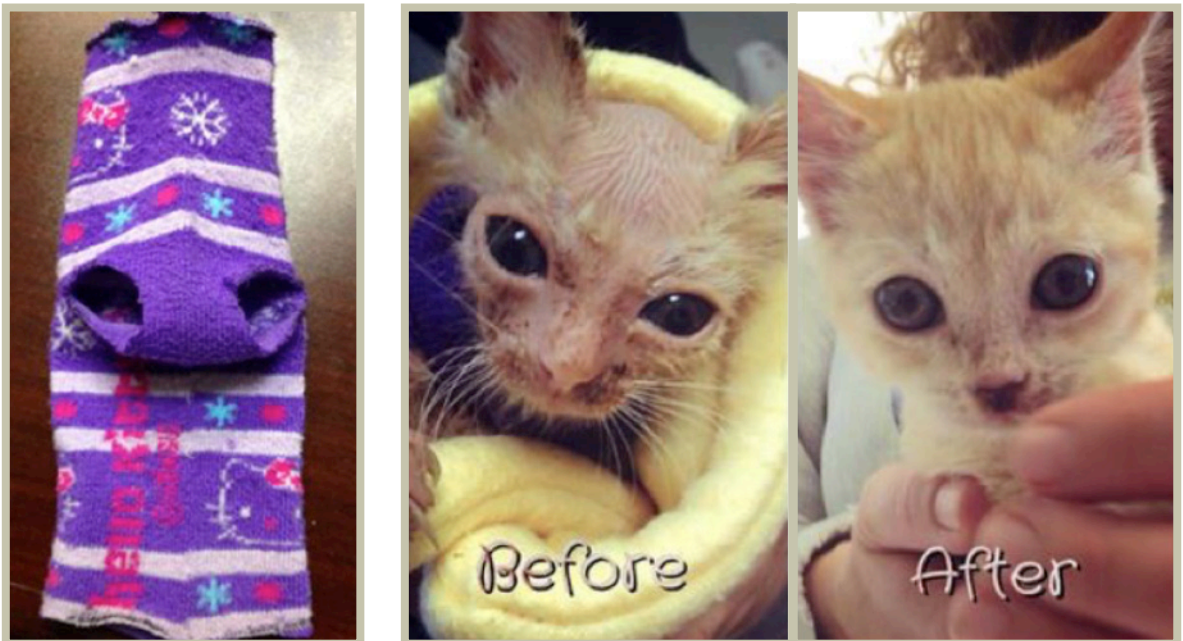
Simple and cheap post-op comfort

Time for the felines to put up their paws and relax! The cats in your spa won't be wearing white terrycloth robes – so how about a cozy sock sweater instead? Over at Austin Pets Alive!, volunteers make socks into sweaters in just a few simple steps:

1. Get a child-sized sock (ask supporters to donate their kids' outgrown socks).
2. Cut off the entire toe section – that's where kitty's head will go!
3. Cut two holes in the heel portion – that's where kitty's front legs will go!

And boom: insta-sweater! These are useful to keep cats warm after surgery.

Due to a nasty bout with ringworm, Poppyseed was completely bald; in the "before" picture she sports a blue sock sweater under a blanket to keep her nice and toasty.



Photos: Austin Pets Alive!

Lounging

Om, Sweet Om

A comfy yoga mat helps her find balance

Whether kitteh chooses to stretch out her paws or sit in gentle meditation, a comfy yoga mat under her feet is the perfect way to enjoy her spa day.

When Chico Animal Shelter received a donation of yoga mats, they measured the cat cages and had volunteers cut the mats to fit the bottoms. Gina Catallo of CAS explains: “The yoga mats have been incredibly helpful because not only do the beds not slip around the cages as much, but if water spills, it can easily be wiped up.” The cushy mats also serve to insulate the cats from the cold, metal floor.

PVC-type mats can be cleaned by spraying them down with soap and water and wiping with a disposable cloth. You can also pop ‘em into the washer, just like they do at CAS. To disinfect the mats, spray them with disinfectant and allow proper contact time, or submerge and then hang to dry. For mats that are harder to sanitize, provide one mat per cat and discard when it’s soiled or when the animal leaves the shelter.

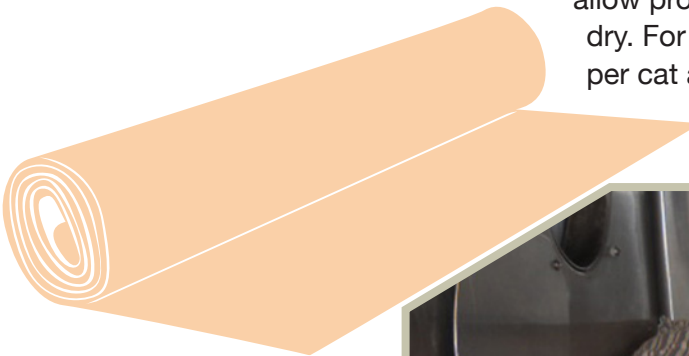


Photo: Chico Animal Shelter

Lounging

Let Sleeping Cats Lie

Here's a pattern cats can get down with

And now for the best part of a spa day – nap time! Not only do felines love chillaxing in these cozy hammocks, but they're a great way to catch the eye of potential adopters! Tracey Collins from PAWS of Hertford County set out to get one of these into every kitty kennel at the Murfreesboro, NC, shelter – and mission accomplished! Here are her instructions for making durable, machine-washable hammocks. *(This would be a great project for crafty volunteers.)*



Photos: Tracey Collins, PAWS of Hertford County

Lounging

Let Sleeping Cats Lie *(continued)*

How to Make 3 Hammocks

Materials:

- 36 inches of 60-inch-wide fleece
- 4 yards of webbing (you will need 12-foot-long strips)

Instructions:



1. Fold fleece in half, so you have a doubled-over piece that is 18 inches by 60 inches.
2. Cut out six 18-inch squares; you will have a few inches left over (*Figure 1*).
3. Cut webbing into a dozen 12-inch strips; use a lighter to burn each end so they don't fray (*Figure 2*).
4. Line up your straps – double over a strap to make a 6-inch loop, and place one loop at each corner (*Figure 3*).
5. Loop should point toward center, and ends are in corners of fleece (*Figure 4*).
6. Sandwich each loop between 2 pieces of fleece and pin (*Figures 5 & 6*).
7. Sew around edges; make sure to go back and forth over the webbing several times.
8. Leave a gap big enough to turn right-side out.
9. Turn right-side out and zigzag stitch around entire hammock.
10. Use caribiners to hang hammock in kennel.

See Figures on the next page.

Lounging

Let Sleeping Cats Lie *(continued)*

Figures:



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

Lounging

Comfy Cat Bed

Let 'em snuggle up in fleecy fuzzy softness

A cozy bed made from a simple, inexpensive oil pan – who knew? Visitors will love watching your shelter cats snuggle up in these durable, machine-washable beds. Instructions are courtesy of creative Tracey Collins from PAWS of Hertford County.

Photos: Tracey Collins, PAWS of Hertford County



Materials:

- 1 30-inch square of fleece
- 1 13-inch square of fleece
- 28 inches elastic (1/2-inch wide)
- Small amount of fiberfill
- Oil pan (get 'em for a few dollars in the auto section of large stores, or ask for donations)



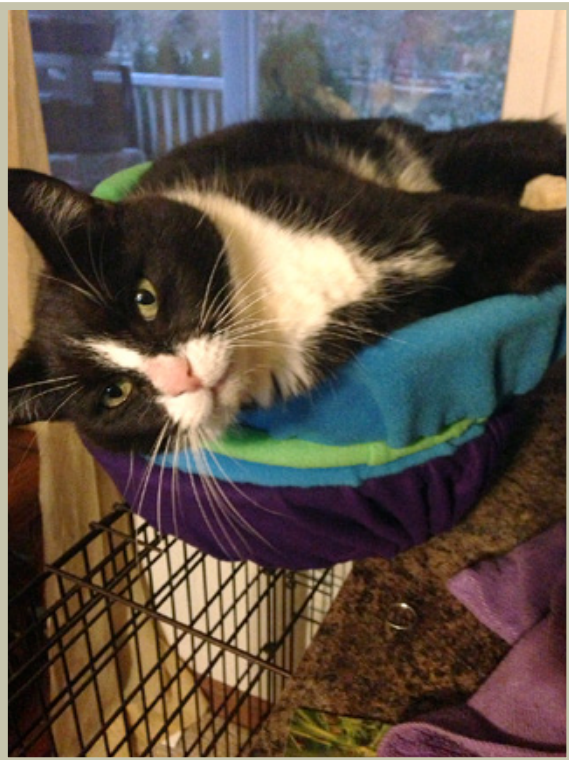
Note: If you buy 43 inches of standard-width fleece, this will make two beds

Lounging

Comfy Cat Bed *(continued)*

Instructions:

1. Fold over 30-inch square of fleece twice so you have a square, and then cut it so you have a circle.
2. Do the same with 13-inch square of fleece for the inner circle.
3. Line up centers of circles and pin. Then pin inner circle around the edges (*Figure 1*).
4. Sew inner circle to outer circle with a zigzag stitch. Leave a 3-inch opening (*Figure 2*).



5. Stuff inner circle with fiberfill. Do not overstuff.
6. Sew opening closed (*Figure 3*).
7. Sew casing for elastic on big circle, using zig-zag stitch. No need to pin – just fold tiny darts in as you go along to go with the curve. This is about 1 inch folded over (*Figure 4*). Leave a 2-inch opening.
8. Pin your elastic to the opening, and then with another big safety pin, thread your elastic (*Figure 5*).
9. Tie ends of elastic very securely, and then sew the opening closed.
10. Finish bed by placing fleece in oil pan, folding over the edges; watch the cuteness ensue (*Figure 6*).

Lounging

Comfy Cat Bed *(continued)*

Figures:



Figure 1

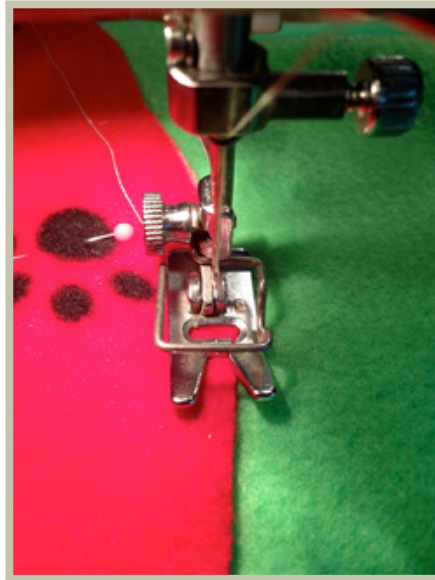


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

Lounging

When a Neck Hole is a Door

Koan? No, grasshopper, it's a T-shirt tent

Inhale...exhale...ah, what feline doesn't enjoy a secluded meditation space? Since cats love hiding out (and sleeping in) this is a great project. Ask crafty volunteers to make feline tents constructed simply from two hangers and a T-shirt that can be removed for easy washing. Visitors will be smitten watching your cats get in the zone!



Lillian, an ASPCA office foster cat, hides from her inbox. Photo: Maggie Luckadoo

Lounging

When a Neck Hole is a Door *(continued)*

Materials:

- One medium T-shirt
- One 15" x 15" piece of cardboard
- Two wire hangers
- Tape
- Safety pins
- Wire cutters or pliers

Instructions:

1. Cut the hooks off both hangers and shape the wires into two arcs.
2. Poke a hole in each corner of your piece of cardboard.
3. Tape the wire arcs together at their centers to form a tent-like frame.
4. Poke the four ends of the hanger frame down through the four holes in your piece of cardboard. Bend the wire ends under and tape them down.
5. Pull the shirt over the tent frame and position it so the neck hole is in the front middle to make kitty's door.
6. Fold up the excess from the bottom of the shirt and tighten it up so the neck hole is taut, and pin the bottom in place. Then pull the sleeves tight and pin them in place.

Instructions courtesy of Instructables.com

More Resources

Want more cheap (or free!) ideas for adding to your shelter's enrichment and comfort? Download:

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