

From Trash to Treasure, Shelter Edition

How you can use everyday items to solve everyday problems



A little creativity can go a long way in stretching each precious dollar while giving you the tools you need to get the work done.

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!



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1. Paper or Plastic?

Got room on your plate for a side of good thinking?

As an alternative to plastic E-collars for kittens who've just been spayed or neutered, Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS) makes their own out of paper plates. Says BARCS' JoAnn Goldberger, "Using a pair of scissors, cut a straight line and circle in the center of a small paper plate. Wrap the plate around the kitten's head, staple it up the seams and voila, there you have it!"



Not only are these paper versions more flexible than E-collars, which can be so hard for little ones to move around in, they can save time and money. They're great for use in foster homes, when volunteers might not always have access to E-collars (especially late at night!) and can be used in shelter clinics

when a quick E-collar is called for (and P.S., they can be removed quickly and easily). Just take care to be mindful of the little staples and use under supervision, as you would most E-collars.

2. You've Come a Long Way, Baby Pool!

Need a whelping hand when an expectant mama dog comes to your shelter?

Many agencies, including Charleston Animal Society (CAS) and Animal House Rescue and Grooming in Fort Collins, CO, use plastic pools for whelping boxes.

Easy to clean, disinfect and reuse, baby pools are perfect for use in a shelter setting as a safe and sanitary area to contain puppies. Adds CAS' Kay Hyman, "They also provide mom easy retreat for some R&R and keep the pups safe and dry. They have smooth edges, and as the pups grow, they learn to jump out to go pee and jump back in to be with their siblings!"

Think a plastic baby pool would work swimmingly as a whelping box at your agency? Be sure to ask your supporters to donate one!



Animal House Rescue and Grooming's Penny patiently awaits the debut of her pups...



And here she is with them at the official premiere!



Photos: Animal House Rescue and Grooming

3. Sock It To 'Em!

Take a look at what we've got cooking

Here's a supplemental heat source for animals recovering from spay/neuter surgery AND a great project for volunteers and kids.

Simply fill a sock with uncooked rice and tie it closed. When warmed up in a microwave, the rice sock is a source of heat for an animal who is wrapped in a blanket. Be sure to wrap the sock in a pillowcase, as shown in the photo here. This way, the rice sock is never in direct contact with the patient, as it could spread disease or have the potential to burn an animal.



4. Made From Scratch

When it comes to recycling donated items, just say "carpet" diem

At the Charleston Animal Society, donated carpet turns into scratching posts for the kitties. "This is a great project for Boy Scouts or school groups," says CAS. "Simply cut into 3- by 8-inch pieces, use a hole punch to make a hole at the top, and attach to the cage with a plastic shower hook. When a cat or kitten is adopted, we send it home with them."

Don't sweep this idea under the carpet!



Photo: Charleston Animal Society

5. Towel Cowl

Oh yes, you look mah-ve-lous

Looks aside, what we're really amazed at is this simple, gentle technique for safely handling those nervous small dogs.

To create this lovely cowl neck, simply wrap a rolled towel loosely around the dog's neck twice. "It's a great low-stress restraint technique to keep the handler safely out of reach of a dog's teeth," explains the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine's Brenda Griffin, DVM, MS, DACVIM. "It's much easier to apply than a muzzle, making it less stressful for both the dog and the handler."



Photo: Florida College of Veterinary Medicine

6. If the Bootie Fits

Here's a hot tip

Dogs and cats can rapidly lose heat from their extremities, so use baby socks to keep paws warm while animals are under anesthesia and recovering. So functional...and cute to boot! Thanks to Humane Ohio for sharing this great idea.



7. Eat, Treat, Recycle, Repeat

Don't be shy

Looking for a quick and inexpensive way to help your shy or fearful dogs in the kennels? The resourceful folks at Wisconsin Humane Society are recycling yogurt cups as treat cups!

A simple hole punch and a zip tie allows you to fasten the cup to the kennel. Next, fill with soft tasty treats and be sure to hang a sign with simple instructions for visitors, like the one shown here. In no time your shy and fearful pooches will be looking forward to their next visitor. When it comes to clean-up, simply cut the zip tie and place in the recycling bin.



8. Warming Trends

Beat the heat

Preventing hypothermia in spay/neuter patients is more favorable than trying to treat hypothermia once it occurs. These photos show two different ways that surgical scrub and rinse solution can be warmed prior to their use on a patient's surgical site.

The top baby wipe warmer holds gauze squares with surgical scrub and the bottom warmer holds gauze squares with a rinse solution.





This photo shows two baby bottle warmers. Each warmer contains a squirt bottle, one with surgical scrub and the other with rinse solution. These agents are squirted onto gauze squares and then used on the patient's surgical site.

In order to prevent accidental burns, it is extremely important to ensure that the scrub and rinse solutions are only warm—not hot. All containers and warming agents are to be emptied and disinfected at the end of each day's use.



Photos: Humane Alliance

9. (Dry Erase) Boarding School

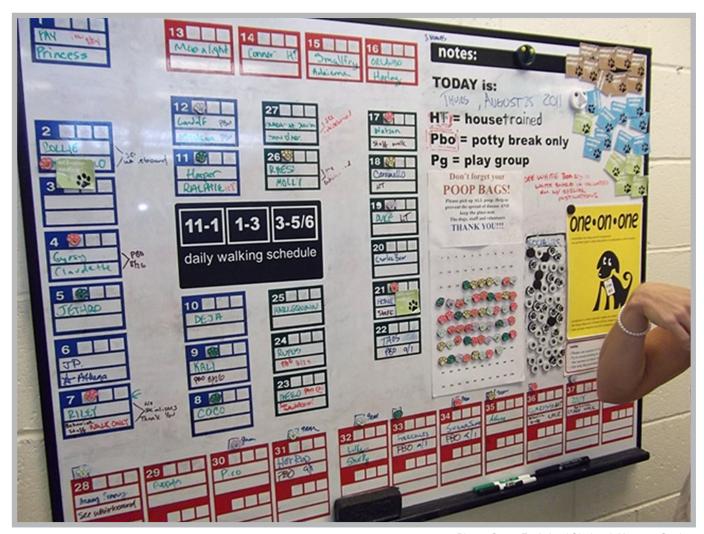
Try this innovative board of directions

Your daily dog walking schedule should be two things – easy to read and accessible. Santa Fe Animal Shelter & Humane Society's custom board displays a handy overview of the kennels, allowing volunteers to see at a glance which dogs have been walked and when. Because the surface can be easily erased, it's simple to adjust info as often as needed.

Santa Fe shares useful details on what makes their board – designed by a volunteer! – so successful:

- The board is laid out as an exact map of the kennels, with each kennel having three small boxes at the top to designate the three volunteer shifts.
- Dog names are written in each kennel space daily.
- Numbered paw print magnets show the order of walks, done in chronological order. As the second volunteer shift comes in, they take the next number in line and start the second round of walks using the second box, and so on.
- Magnets that say "Adopted Today!" or "Resting Today," "PBO (potty breaks only)," etc.
- Small round paw print magnets are also used for those dogs who need to be socialized, but aren't ready for full walks just yet.

Want to give it a shot? A simple Google search will pull up plenty of sites where you can order your own custom board.



Santa Fe Animal Shelter & Humane Society's custom board

Photo: Santa Fe Animal Shelter & Humane Society

10. File Under: Sweet Dreams

You use, they snooze

In this day and age, donors are impressed with a charity's ability to stretch dollars. At the Charleston Animal Society, Director of Ops Pearl Sutton tells us, smart staffers recycle desk-top file holders into great cat and kitten beds. They can also be turned over and used as a hiding place. And you can, ahem, rest assured that you're maximizing your resources.



11. Thinking Inside the Box

Add this idea to your in-box

Insulated boxes like the one shown here are often used as packaging for vaccines, but don't dash to put 'em in the trash—you can put them to use in your spay/neuter clinic, says Sara White, DVM.

If you use rice socks (see page 5) to promote warmth for patients in the post-operative period, storing them in an insulated box will keep the rice socks warm in between use—a big timesaver, since you'll need to reheat them less often throughout the day.

If any of your patients require subcutaneous or intravenous fluids (i.e. pregnant, lactating or dehydrated animals), the fluids, too, can be stored in an insulated box for ready use.

As always, the rice socks and fluids should only be warm and NOT hot. Before use, each item should be assessed to determine if ready to be used with patients.



Photo: Operation PETS: The Spay/Neuter Clinic of Western New York

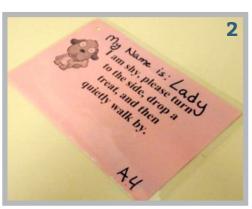
12. Reusable Kennel Cards

Sign up for this great idea

Laminating your kennel cards keeps them from falling apart, but it's a waste of time and resources to create a new card from scratch for each animal. Here's a neat trick for swapping out animal info on laminated signs so you can use them over and over.



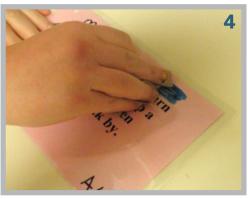
Using a permanent marker, write your information on your laminated sign.



Your sign will be waterproof and ready to use.



When you are ready to clean the sign and change the info, use a dry erase marker and scribble over the permanent marker.



Quickly use a paper towel or dry erase marker to wipe off the scribble and magically, the permanent marker will also come off.



Photos: Wisconsin Humane Society

Now you have a clean sign ready for the next animal!

13. Carry On

Don't throw away those old pet carriers

Take a tip from the resourceful folks at Charleston Animal Society and use either the top or the bottom for puppies. They love to snuggle in them, as demonstrated by the little guys here.

Forgive us for getting carried away, but cats can benefit from this idea, too. When turned over, the carriers make great hiding places/chill-out spaces for felines.



Photo: Charleston Animal Society

14. Gimme Shelter

It's just a bin away!

Check out Heimlich's maneuvers as he shows off his cool cat tower. Three plastic storage totes feature cut-out "windows" and have been bolted together to make an easy-to-clean tower—providing a place for play and a little privacy for the more reserved feline residents in your shelter. Inexpensive...and aesthetically appealing, too!



Photo: Coulee Regional Humane Society

15. Color Coding Within Reach

Clever cross-infection protection

Take a look at this nifty system, courtesy of Connecticut Humane Society. Each of these cleaning tools is stored where staff and volunteers can easily reach them. They have a consistent, safe and neat place for storage, and the super-simple color coding by room makes it very clear that these tools are for and from this room.

Note that the wall mount itself is color-coded, as are all of the tools in the room. Should you encounter a tool of a different color, you know that someone has mistakenly moved this tool from another room, and can disinfect the tool and return it to its correct room.

Don't think that this color coding has to be limited to these specific tools! Step stools, hoses, clipboards, crates, spray bottles and... wait for it!... schedules, volunteers, and even staff can be color-coded to prevent cross-infection from one room to another.









Photos: Connecticut Humane Society

16. Everybody's Got Dirty Laundry

Keep it under wraps

Here's another solution to cross-infection pollution. Check out Asheville Humane Society's answer to keeping dirty, potentially infectious laundry from being accidently added to clean laundry. Large labeling goes a long way in preventing mix-ups!



Photo: Asheville Humane Society

More Resources

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