

# Animal Helper



Complete six activities.

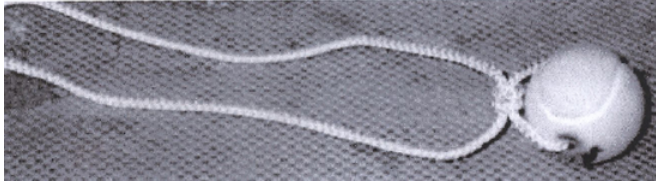
- 1.** Visit an animal shelter and find out what kinds of animals they have and where the animals come from. Ask if they use volunteers and how those volunteers can help.
- 2.** Volunteer two hours of your time to help at a shelter under the supervision of the shelter staff.
- 3.** Find out who originated the idea of helping and sheltering hurt and abandoned animals.
- 4.** Find out what services veterinarians offer to animal shelters. Does your local shelter have a paid vet on staff or do they use local veterinary offices?
- 5.** Create a poster to show people who may be interested in adopting a pet where to get one. Your poster should include information about where to find a local shelter, what kinds of animals are available, and adoption procedures. Hang your poster in a local store, school, or religious building.
- 6.** Hold a pet food drive to gather donations for your local shelter. Find out what kinds of food are best for the health of pets.
- 7.** Make a dog or cat toy and donate it to unwanted pets. Make sure that the toy is pet-safe. (See the following pages or search the Internet for some ideas.)
- 8.** Go to an animal shelter, ask the staff what kids can do to help (such as walking the dogs or playing with the cats) and do it.
- 9.** Find out how shelters are financed. Are they supported only by individual donations or do corporations help out?
- 10.** Make some donation jars to help support your local shelter. Be sure to label your jars with the name of the shelter. Check on your jars frequently and be sure to take this money to the shelter.

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# Pet Toy Ideas: Dogs

## Toss Ball

Some hounds love chasing after items tossed for them. Here's one that's easy on your throwing arm and a blast for a hound. They take just a few minutes to make and are very inexpensive.



What you will need: nine feet of rope and one can of tennis balls (Makes three toys.)

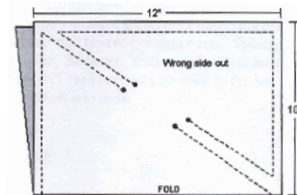
1. Place one tennis ball in a clamp or vise.
2. Use a drill with a large drill bit to drill a hole through the tennis ball (one hole on each side).
3. Thread the rope through the holes.
4. Tie a simple knot near the ball.
5. Knot or burn the ends of the rope to prevent fraying.
6. Tie a second knot near the ends of the rope.

## Gutless Fleece Toys

It seems like every hound loves those faux fleece toys — you know, the ones shaped like little people. The first problem with those is that they can cost \$8 to \$12 each. Yikes! A yard of faux fleece at the fabric store costs around \$8. With that yard, you can make 10 to 20 toys, depending upon the shape you choose. The second problem is that the manufacturers put stuffing in them. We have one hound who can remove all the stuffing within 30 seconds. What a mess! The hounds have just as much fun with the “gutless” version.

What you will need: one yard of faux fleece

For the maximum number of toys per yard and the quickest production time, cut the fleece into 12" x 20" rectangles. Fold each piece with the right sides together and sew as shown at right. Cut between the stitch lines that run diagonally across the fleece. Turn the piece right side out and stitch the hole shut.



The hounds are happy with triangles. However, sometimes you want something special, perhaps as a gift. I've made hearts, initials, bones, and gingerbread men. Place two pieces of fleece with the right sides together. With a marker or pencil, draw the shape on the wrong side of the fleece (if you're making initials, be sure to mirror the letter so that it will be correct when you turn it inside out). Stitch along the pencil line, leaving a small hole to turn the toy right side out. Turn the fleece right side out and stitch the hole closed.

# Pet Toy Ideas: Cats

## Stuffed Cloth Toy

A stuffed cloth mouse or any small, stuffed cloth toy is excellent for cats. Be aware that some imported cloth toys may have an insecticide sprayed on them (as required by some import laws) that can harm a cat. Please check the toys carefully. Also make sure that there are no pieces that the cat can swallow. Usually a plain “rag” doll type of toy works best — nothing fancy, no eyes or buttons, and the softer, the better. Kittens like to bat them around, and sometimes the toy will even become personal to the cat, like young children’s security blankets are to them.

## Noisemaker Toy

This is another cat favorite — not too much noise, though, or the cat will be scared. Usually something like an old film canister with a little pebble or a penny inside makes a great cat toy. Anything that has a top that can be securely fastened will work fine. For the rattle, do not use cat food. This will make the cat try to open the toy to get the food out. The plastic pieces can hurt your cat’s digestive tract.

## Scratching Post

A cat scratches at things not only for play but also to strengthen its “grip” and other muscles. It is natural for cats to scratch, and a cat cannot be made not to scratch. Even declawed cats will attempt to scratch and claw objects. Teaching your cat to use a scratching post can save many pieces of furniture. Scratching posts may be bought or homemade. To make one, just attach a piece of carpet around a piece of non-treated wood. The “carpet” side goes against the wood, and the underside is what the cat will scratch. You can attach the post to a flat base. You can also just attach a piece of carpet to the wall in some manner. It should be high enough to allow your cat to extend its body while scratching. Another idea is to place a wicker planter, like the ones that hold fake trees, in the room. That way, you have a tree and a scratching post all in one!

