

# DO IT YOURSELF PACKET

Enrichment & Comfort  
Items for Small Animals



Thank you for your interest in helping the animals at San Diego Humane Society! We would not be able to provide the level of care and commitment to our animals without the help of people like you. This *Do It Yourself* packet outlines several projects that are fun and easy and will help the animals have a more enriched experience while in our care. A Volunteer Log is included on the last page if needed for service hours.

You may drop off items at any of our campuses Tuesday - Sunday 9:00am-6:00p.m.

San Diego  
5500 Gaines St.  
San Diego, CA

El Cajon  
1373 N. Marshall Ave.  
El Cajon, CA

Escondido  
3500 Burnet Drive  
Escondido, CA

Oceanside  
572 Airport Rd.  
Oceanside, CA

To receive a service letter, please scan the Volunteer Log and email it to:

[volunteercenter@sdhumane.org](mailto:volunteercenter@sdhumane.org)



# HANGING CHEW TOY

## Materials:

- Sisal rope
- Scissors
- Untreated wood pieces with edges (squares, rectangles, etc.)
- Drill (may be needed if wood pieces don't have holes)
- Optional items: popsicle sticks, untreated wicker, cardboard, raffia, bells
- *Note: If you use colored wood, please make sure that it is non-toxic.*

## Instructions:

1. Cut the sisal rope so it is about 12 inches in length.
2. Tie a knot at the top.
3. String wood shapes or other items on the rope in any way you want. Get creative!
4. Tie a small knot underneath each wood shape or item to prevent it from slipping down.
5. When finished tying on all pieces, tie a knot at the bottom of your length of rope. Add a bell for some added fun!





# RABBIT RATTLES

## Materials:

- Plastic bottle caps
  - Heavy twine or sisal rope
  - Drill
- OR
- Plastic shower curtain rings
  - Mason jar rings

## Instructions:

### Option A:

1. Drill a hole through the middle of each plastic lid.
2. Cut a piece of rope approximately 10" long. Make a knot about 2" from one end of the rope that is larger than the hole you drilled in the cap. Then slide one of the plastic caps on and make another knot to keep the cap in place. Keep doing this until you have 4-5 plastic caps on the string. Securely tie the two ends together to form a circle.

OR

3. Make a knot about 2" from one end of the rope that is larger than the hole you drilled in the cap. Then slide on 4-5 of the plastic caps and make a knot about 2" after the final cap. This will allow the caps to move around, making a great noise when being tossed around by our bunnies! Finish by tying the two ends together to make a circle.

**Note:** Be sure to make the rattle small enough so that it cannot get stuck around the rabbit's head.

Option B: Take a hard plastic shower ring and join together 2-3 Mason jar rings to form a rattle. Quick and easy!



# ROLLIN' RATTLES

## Materials:

- Small rounded canister with lid (no larger than 4-5" tall or wide)
- Clean pebbles or beads
- Kraft paper or large paper shopping bags
- Sisal rope or twine

## Instructions:

1. Rinse and dry the canister and pebbles.
2. Place the pebbles or beads in the canister and close the lid.
3. Cut out a large piece of Kraft paper or cut your paper bag to make it flat.
4. Wrap the paper around the can multiple times so that it is thick enough to prevent the rabbit from easily ripping the paper off.
5. After you have thoroughly wrapped the can, twist the ends on both sides and tie it off with the rope or twine. Wrap the rope several times and make numerous knots so that it cannot be chewed off easily. If you are left with lots of paper on each end, cut it so that only a couple inches remain on each end. Add some bells for extra fun!
6. The rattle is ready for the rabbit to enjoy!



# NO SEW RAT HAMMOCK

## Materials:

- Fleece
- Fabric scissors
- Metal shower curtain hooks or metal book/binder rings

## Instructions:

1. Cut two square pieces of fleece the same size (approximately 15" x 15" - 18" x 18")
2. Place one piece on top of the other, and then cut 1' strips on all sides.
3. Take a strip from the bottom and knot it to the corresponding strip on top. Do this until all strips are tied together.
4. Securely knot a hook to each corner, and the hammock is ready to go!



# NO SEW DOUBLE HAMMOCK

## Materials:

- Fleece
- Fabric scissors
- Metal shower curtain hooks or metal book/binder rings
- Measuring Tape

## Instructions:

1. Cut two square pieces of each size of fleece: 12" x 12" and 30" x 30"
2. Place the two same-size pieces on top of each other and cut 4" x 4" squares out of each corner and cut 1" strips on all sides.
3. Take a strip from the bottom and knot it to the corresponding strip on top. Do not tie the corner strips.
4. Lay the smaller hammock on top of the larger hammock, and knot together the corner strips that you previously left untied.
5. Securely knot a hook to each corner, and your double decker hammock is ready!





The double decker hammock gives our rats a comfy place to cuddle when they want to burrow and hide, and it can also provide two levels of snuggling for them to enjoy!



# RAT TRAIL MIX

## Ingredients:

1 cup rolled oats

1 cup gluten free pasta

½ cup Total cereal

½ cup Kashi cereal

¼ cup puffed rice cereal

¼ cup cheerios

¼ cup sunflower seeds (in shell, raw, no salt)

¼ cup pepitas (raw, shelled pumpkin seeds, no salt)

## Instructions:

1. Mix the ingredients together and place in a large Ziploc bag for a delicious treat for our rats!



# SMALL MAMMAL POUCH

The small mammal pouch can be used to hold guinea pigs during our program visits, and it can also be used for wildlife patients, especially babies, to make them feel safe and minimize stress. The pouch is enclosed on three sides, making a bag. It should take approximately 15 - 30 minutes to make!

## Materials:

- **Suggested fabrics:** Flannel, cotton, fleece or other tight-woven strong fabrics are all good to use. We use these fabrics to avoid catching toes during burrowing.
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Sewing Supplies (needle, thread and/or sewing machine)

## Instructions:

### 1. Cut Fabric:

Cut two equal-sized rectangles. The final pouch will have the same width and half the length as the rectangles (minus seam allowances).

You can make pouches of ANY size, but an average pouch will be 6-8" wide x 12-16" long.



2. **Fold Fabric:** Fold the rectangles in half, right sides together. (Right side is the side you eventually want to show. For printed fabric, the patterned side is the right side.) The fold will be the bottom of the sack, and the opposite open end will be the top-entry of the sack.

3. **Sew Sides:** Sew the sides together. For a stronger hold, sew small stitches and double-back on the sides closest to the fold.

4. **Invert One Bag:** Invert one bag (doesn't matter which) so it is right-side out. For fabric without a print, the seam is on the wrong side and hidden on the right side.

5. **Stack the Bags:** Stack the two bags with right-sides together, so that seams are on the outside and inside of the new lined bag.



6. **Sew Top Edge:** Sew the top edge of the pouches together, leaving a small opening. The opening needs to be big enough to pull fabric through -- a few inches is usually good.

7. **Pull Fabric Through:** Pull the fabric through the opening left in the top seam. Finish pulling the fabric through the opening in the top seam. At this point, all the right sides are exposed (prints and no seams).

8. **Topstitch:** Stuff the lining back into the bag, so the outside fabric faces out and the lining is inside the pouch. You'll still have the hole you used to turn the bag out. Tuck the exposed ends of the fabric into the pouch, between the wrong sides of the lining and outside fabric. Then do one line of stitching all around the top edge of the pouch, sealing that hole closed but still leaving the pouch open.



# HAMSTER HABITATS

Many people don't realize just how much space a hamster needs to be happy and healthy, but it is much more than the hamster cages you might buy at the pet store provide. This DIY habitat is bigger, better and provides plenty of room for your hamster to enjoy!

## Materials:

- 100+ quart plastic storage bin - quality is important!
  - Your bin needs to have a **minimum of 450 square inches of floor space** (measure the length and width of the bottom of the bin and multiply to figure out the floor space)
  - Bin should be made of sturdy plastic and have a locking lid
- ¼ " or ½" Hardware Cloth
- Drill
- Wire Cutters / Snips
- Exacto Knife or Dremel - this will be used to cut through the plastic lid
- Zip Ties
- Tape Measure
- Sharpie
- Duct Tape (get creative - colored tape can add some fun to the cage!)

## Instructions:

1. **Place the lid face down and use the Sharpie to draw an outline of the area to be cut.** This is where you will be placing the hardware cloth. Be sure not to get too close to the edges of the lid, but use as large an area as possible to ensure proper ventilation (minimum 18"x8").
2. **Cut out the rectangle.** Using your Exacto Knife or Dremel, start by making scores in the plastic, gradually deepening your cut each time until you are able to pop out the plastic piece. Smooth any sharp edges with sandpaper or cover with duct tape.
3. **Drill holes in the lid where the zip ties are going to be placed.** It helps to mark the spots first with a Sharpie. We recommend every 2-3 inches.
4. **Place the hardware cloth over the hole in the lid to measure the size you'll need.** Measure the cloth about 1" bigger on all sides.
5. **Use the wire cutters to cut the hardware cloth.** Cut as close to the edge of the metal as possible so that you don't have any sharp points.
6. **Turn the lid over and attach the hardware cloth to the bottom of the lid.** Use the zip ties to tightly secure the cloth.
7. **Cut the excess length of the zip ties.**
8. **Cover the edges of the hardware cloth and the zip ties with duct tape** for extra reinforcement and to cover any sharp edges from the hardware cloth.

Video tutorial: <https://youtu.be/i5e-2yKLX2Q>

Instructions with photos: <https://hamsterguru.com/how-to-make-a-hamster-bin-cage/>



# CHICKEN SWINGS

When you watch chickens as they forage and interact, they are always busy. Chickens are inquisitive and love to investigate a new structure in the coop area. Adding a chicken swing is great enrichment for a flock of chickens!

## Materials:

- Base board that is between 18 and 24 inches long. You can use a slab of firewood or purchase a piece of lumber.
- 4 pieces of ¼ in rope, 5 ft long each
- Drill (drill bit should be 2 sizes bigger than the rope diameter)
- 2 snap hooks (optional)

## Instructions:

9. Place the swing base on a solid surface or work bench. Using the drill, make 2 holes in each end of the base.
10. Push the rope ends through the holes in the swing base. On the underneath side, tie a knot to keep the rope from coming back through the hole. Repeat for the 3 other holes.



11. Once all 4 ropes are secured to the base, tie 2 ropes on each side together (about 1/3 of the way up the rope).

Instructions with photos: <https://backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/coops/make-a-chicken-swing/>




# Volunteer Hours Log

Please list all volunteer hours completed. We will sign off on up to 15 hours of service each month.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Time	Project	Please explain how you completed this project
		Made enrichment items	
		Collected supplies	
		Had a bake sale	
		Made and posted flyers for my donation drive or bake sale	
		Posted Flyers	
		Posted on Facebook	
		Recruited friends to help me	
		Other project:	
		Other project:	
		TOTAL HOURS	<p><b>Thank you for volunteering!</b></p> 

**San Diego Humane Society Acknowledgment of Donation/Service:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name and title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_