

# Simple Shelter Enrichment for Cats

*An enriched environment is one in which an animal has variety, choice and control over its daily activities. Environmental enrichment should be conducted as part of a comprehensive behavioral wellness plan that ensures all animals receive proper housing, consistent daily routines, adequate physical exercise, mental stimulation, social companionship and positive reinforcement-based training. These exercises will be most effective when utilized as a preventive measure, rather than when trying to address problems that are already in existence. Enrichment should address all the senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell.*

- Provide a variety of toys in the cage or hanging from the cage and rotate them on a regular basis (cheap items work just as well: e.g. wads of paper, pipe cleaners, ping pong or golf practice balls, golf tees, bottle caps, etc.)
- Provide carpet remnants or corrugated cardboard for scratching
- Place a small pinch of catnip on a towel in the cages a couple times per week
- Provide boxes or paper bags for hiding
- Provide cat beds or hammocks for resting
- Provide a perch of some kind so they can get up high
- Play soothing music to reduce stress
- Play bird song CD's
- Place perpetual motion devices in the area outside the cages - set in motion a few times a day
- Turn on a small "disco ball" in the cat room for a few minutes each day
- Hang a mobile and set it in motion a couple times a day
- If there is a window in the cat room, hang a bird feeder outside to attract birds to visit
- Give a food treat at a regular time each day – cat treats, tuna fish, chicken flakes
- Stuff a mini-Kong® or other small plastic container with treats
- Allow long term residents (>14 days in shelter) time out of the cage several times a week and give them access to toys to play with, bags to hide in, scratching posts to scratch on, and cat grass to nibble on
- Social contact with people – grooming, petting, playing
- Clicker training – teach the cats to come to the front of the cage and touch their nose to a target
- Feliway® – Plug a diffuser in cat rooms or spray a piece of fabric and place it in the cage with the stressed cats once a day

