

DIY Cat Shelter With Plastic Tote



Supplies:

- Plastic tote
 - 18-30 gallon tote
 - For more than one cat, consider larger totes or use multiple totes.
- Utility knife
- Styrofoam insulation (foam boards, foam coolers, reflective insulation roll)
- Straw for bedding
 - Be sure to use straw, not hay. Hay will hold moisture making it cold and uncomfortable for the cat.
- Tape measure
- Permanent marker
- Nursery pot (at least 6") *optional
- Duct tape

Instructions:

Step 1: Cut the entrance

- Take your nursery pot and trace the outline of the pot about 3-4 inches from the bottom of the tote.
 - *Helpful hint - Take a hair dryer or heat gun to soften the plastic before cutting the hole
- Cut along this circle using an exacto/utility knife

Step 2: Insulate the tote

- Start by measuring the sides of your tote before you cut. You will want to cover all sides on the inside of your tote.
- There are various types of insulation that you can use for your cat shelter.
 - Double sided reflective insulation roll
 - Styrofoam cooler
 - Foam board insulation

- From here, tape or glue the sides of your insulation together with duct tape.
- You will need to cut a hole out of your insulation on the side where your entrance is. It is easy to use an exacto or utility knife for this process
 - . This should be easy as we already have the first hole cut here. You can trace it again with the nursery pot if needed.

Step 3: Tape the nursery pot

- Start by cutting the bottom of the nursery pot out so that way we have a tunnel.
- Once placed into the hole, use the duct tape and cut slits halfway through each strip of tape. Ensure that you do not have gaps when taping the pot to your tote!
- Tape both inside and outside of your shelter.

Step 4: Add the straw

- Straw repels moisture and traps heat which makes for great bedding to use in the cat shelter. It is relatively cheap to buy and makes replacing old/worn straw much easier.
- Loosely pack the straw in the shelter to the quarter or halfway point. When the cat uses the shelter the straw will compact a lot!

*Helpful hint - Do not use hay for bedding! Hay holds moisture which makes it very uncomfortable for the cat and can even cause them to get sick!

Step 5: Label your tote (optional)

- If you are using your cat shelter on your own property this step isn't needed. But, if you are using this tote in a colony setting you may want to label your tote as "Cat Shelter" to prevent tampering.



Step 1: Cut The Entrance Of Your Tote

For this part of the process, you can pick whichever side you like more as the entrance. For tight areas or for lining up multiple totes together, cutting the hole on the smaller side of the tote would work.

Helpful Hint

- Use a heat gun or a hair dryer to warm the plastic before using a knife to cut. This will make it a lot easier and smoother.
- Cut your hole slightly smaller than the top of your nursery pot

Always ensure that your entrance is at least 3 - 4 inches off the ground. This helps with keeping rain, snow, dirt, etc. out of the shelter.





Step 2: Insulate The Tote

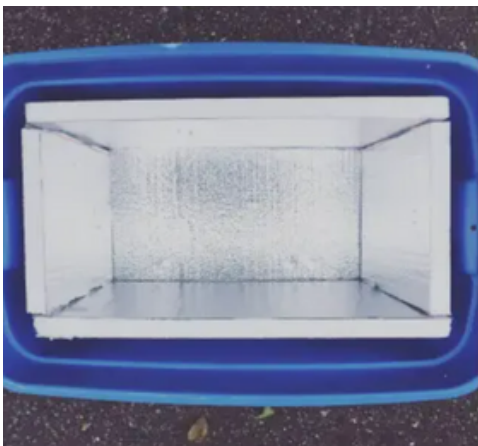
For insulating your tote, you have many options for your source of insulation. Some of these options include:

- EPS foam board insulation sheet
- Styrofoam cooler
- Double sided reflective insulation roll
- A smaller tote to fit inside your large tote (use straw bedding to fill in the areas between totes)

Start by measuring the sides of your tote before you cut. You will want to cover all sides on the inside of your tote including the top! Once measured, cut your sheets and from here you can tape/glue them together.

Helpful Hint

- If your insulation has reflective material, always make sure the reflective side of the insulation is facing inward. This will help retain the heat inside of the shelter.



Once you have all sides taped/glued together, place the foam in the cooler and trace an outline of your entrance on the foam. Using a utility knife, cut a circle that matches the size of your entrance hole.



Step 3: Tape Nursery Pot

When cutting the entrance hole to the cat shelter, sometimes the plastic can be sharp. Using a nursery pot helps to protect the sharp edges. Another great reason to use the nursery pot is to help keep the shelter dry from rain and snow.

The best size to use is a 6in nursery pot. These are relatively inexpensive and easy to work with as they are a soft plastic material. Start by cutting 3/4 to 1 inch off the bottom of your pot to make it into a pipe. Ensure you have a clean cut all the way around so you don't have any sharp edges that can hurt a cat

After you have placed your foam into the cooler with the hole cut out for the entry door, gently place your nursery pot through both holes. If your hole is too small, you can go back and trim off edges to make it fit better. You can now tape both the inside and outside of your shelter where the pot sits.

Helpful Hint

- Take your tape and cut 1" slits halfway through the tape, this will help it fit the curved edges of your pot much better. The slit side of the tape should be facing away from the pot.





Step 4: Add Straw

Adding blankets and pet beds to these cat shelters can cause them to trap in moisture which can be very uncomfortable for cats. During the cold months it can also cause sickness so it is best to use straw for these shelters.

Straw repels moisture and traps heat which makes for great bedding to use in the cat shelter. It is relatively cheap to buy and makes replacing old/worn better much easier.

Loosely pack the straw in the shelter to the quarter or halfway point. When the cat uses the shelter the straw will compact a lot! If you have space between the foam and the tote you can add extra straw for more insulation!

Helpful Hint

- Make sure you are using straw, not hay!





Step 5: Label Your Tote (optional)

After assembling your cat shelter, you may want to add a label to it if people in your area will be able to spot it.

If you are using your cat shelter on your own property this step isn't needed. But, if you are using this tote in a colony setting you may want to label your tote as "Cat Shelter" to prevent tampering.

Helpful Hint

- This is also why using neutral/dark colors for cat shelters helps to keep curious eyes away from your shelters!