



Get instructions for this DIY cat tent at instructables.com/r/jessy.

YOU CAN HACK IT!

USE PET 'HACKS' TO MINIMIZE THE PITFALLS—AND MAXIMIZE THE PLEASURES—OF LIFE WITH THE FURRY SET // BY RUTHANNE JOHNSON

FOR ALL THE LOYALTY and affection our four-legged companions provide, living with pets can bring some frustrations. There's the frayed furniture. The paw prints on kitchen counters. The grooming and parasite control expenses. The fact that there's enough fur on the carpet to stuff a king-size mattress.

Fortunately, pet lovers are an inventive bunch, and websites like BuzzFeed and Lifehacker abound with their MacGyver-like tips. Some hacks help ease owner frustrations; others focus on saving money with DIY alternatives to expensive retail products. Many repurpose household items in creative ways, such as the self-service feline grooming station one tipster constructed by attaching unused toilet bowl brush parts to a cloth-covered piece of wood. Or the cat tent (pictured above) fashioned from a T-shirt, cardboard and wire hangers.

When evaluating pet hacks, keep your companion's safety as the top priority, says KC Theisen, HSUS director of pet care issues, and check with your vet before implementing medical- or food-related tips.

For more ideas, we asked HSUS Facebook fans to submit their favorite solutions to common pet owner dilemmas. Their responses demonstrate that for every problem, there's often more than one way to make "unconditional love" easier and more affordable.

STOP BINGE EATING

While there are plenty of retail products to slow down food inhalers, these tips may work just as well—and cost a lot less:

Put two tennis balls in his bowl and it will slow him down dramatically.

— JACQUI GARRARD

Also putting her food in a muffin pan, that helped my pup. — KASSI WHITE

I used an angel food cake pan for our fast eater. — VAL ANDERSON

Stuff a Kong toy or natural bone with wet food and freeze it. Makes my beagles work for their food and eat slower, and they seem to really enjoy it! — TOBIE WAGNER



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FUR CONTROL

Keeping your house and clothes reasonably fur-free can feel like a losing battle. But a little bit of ingenuity can keep you from resembling a human Sasquatch.

A window squeegee works wonders on furniture and stairs! – CAROLYN MEYERS

A regular rubber glove works [to remove pet hair]—doesn't have to be wet. – JESSICA FELICIANO



I use pillowcases over my pet beds and just change them once a week like I do the sheets on my bed. It keeps the beds and the dogs cleaner. – DONNA CUMMINGS

I use a lint roller on my cat! She loves it and she is getting groomed at the same time! – ANGELA WITT

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

Even the best-behaved animals can have occasional potty mishaps. Here are some recommendations for removing odiferous stains:

Woolite is the best pet stain remover I've found. – BECCA LYNN

Mix 8 oz. peroxide, 2 tbsp. baking soda and 1 tbsp. dish soap into a spray bottle. It will completely neutralize any urine odor. – SHELLY TAYLOR

PAWS OFF

Four legs, claws and a taste for adventure can oftentimes spell trouble. Some folks

use double-sided tape as a deterrent. Here are some other ways to create off-limits areas:

Toilet paper rolls, duct tape and a little patience: pet hack for cord-chewing cats. Cheap alternative, always in stock and customizable. – JAMIE TAYLOR

When I had cats, I put tin foil on the table. They didn't like it and stopped getting on the table. – KAREN LINDSEY

GROOMING & FLEA CONTROL

Pet grooming and parasite control can cost more than a full makeover at the local beauty salon. Try these time- and money-saving hacks:

Seam rippers are great for getting out mats from your pet. – PRISCILLA ELWELL

My vet taught me this tip when I was fostering several cats: Buy the large-dog-size Advantage (not the Advantix) and use a 1 ml syringe to measure out the correct dose for each cat (0.2, 0.4 or 0.8 ml, depending on weight). One vial can treat up to 10 cats; a lot cheaper than buying individual cat doses. – JULIE FALCONER

CAUTIONARY NOTE: Check with your vet first to make sure you're administering proper dosages.

PAW PROTECTION

There are several online tips for DIY booties to protect your dog's feet in freezing weather. Here's another solution from one owner:

When my dog had surgery on his paw at the height of last year's polar vortex, the vet's office told me to wrap the bandage in Press'n Seal when he went outside to do business. Worked like a charm. – JENNIFER CONRAD



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