

Building your own 18 Gallon Plastic Tub Cat Shelters



Make the doorway (Step A): Draw a 6 inch square opening about 6 inches up on the side of the bin where you want the doorway. Next, drill a 5/16 inch starter hole at one of the 4 corners of the 6" square. Use a hand-held jig saw starting at the drilled hole and cut along your line, to cutout the doorway. If you do not have a jig saw, you can use a pair of straight metal snips to cut the opening.



Add weight for stability (Step B): Place a paving brick (8 X 16 X 1 3/4 inch) or similar heavy object in the bottom of the bin.



Create air space (Step C): You will need ten 30-egg sized egg cartons (regular dozen egg size cartons can be used as well) to create a wall of dead space for the bin. Lay egg cartons on the bottom of the bin (on top of the paving brick) and on all 4 sides of the bin. Cut cartons as needed to insure a close fit between cartons and around the bin. Use duct tape to secure the cartons together and to the bin if necessary. The idea is that the cartons should be held securely in place within the bin and to each other. There should be no movement allowed once taped.



Cut egg carton from doorway (Step D): Trace the plastic opening with a felt pen and then using scissors cut through the egg carton to match the dimension of the bin opening.



Secure the egg carton to the plastic bin (Step E): Use duct tape (or other weatherproof tape) to tape the egg carton around the opening.

Install Reflectix to radiate heat back to the cat (Step F): Follow placement of the egg carton layer with a layer of reflective aluminum foil insulation (Reflectix®). One 16" X 25' roll of Reflectix Insulation will provide enough material to insulate four 18-gallon bins. Cut a length of Reflectix long enough to encircle the inside of the egg cartons. Place the Reflectix on edge within the bin and press it into the corners against the egg cartons, allowing for 1 - 3" overlap of the insulation to make a complete seal. It will stand above the top of the bin. Now use a felt marker to mark the 4 corners on the insulation (these lines should be vertical and run the full 16" height of the insulation). Remove the insulation and lay it flat. Use a pair of scissors to cut along each of the four



lines but only to a depth of 4 inches from the bottom and 4 inches from the top, this should leave 8" in the middle uncut. This will create flaps that can be folded down and taped. If needed, cut a rectangle of insulation to fit in the bottom and another to sit on the top. Secure with the tape. Fold and tape the bottom section of the insulation using metal insulating tape.



Mark the opening and cut it out (Step G): Press the insulation against the opening of the bin and outline it with a felt marker. Use a pair of scissors to cut the opening. Secure the insulation to the bin with duct tape again, overtop of the tape holding the egg cartons in place.



Form the top of the insulating layer (Step H): Fold over the 4 sections of the insulation to form a lid or top to the Reflectix package. Tape these sections together with metal insulating tape. Be sure that you have left enough room to lay the final egg carton layer above the insulation so that you are able to secure the lid.



Add the egg carton layer on top (Step I): Lay more cartons across the top of your bin, cut any carton edges as needed to make a secure fit, and tape them together with duct tape. There should be enough room left to lay the lid on top of the final layer of egg cartons for a secure fit.

Secure the plastic lid (Step J): Place the lid on the bin making sure the fit is snug. To secure the lid, you will need to drill holes through the edge of the lid and into the lip of the bin. Use a 5/32" drill bit and drill four sets of holes around the perimeter of the lid, placing two sets on each of the long sides of the bin. Be careful not to drill into the body of the bin. Use a Zip tie through each set of holes to fasten the lid to the bin. For extra waterproofing, you may cover with duct tape.

Insert straw into the bin (Step K): Use enough to fill about 1/2 the volume of the bin. The cat will enjoy snuggling down into the straw, and body heat will be radiated back to the cat from the Reflectix insulation.

Material List

- 1 - 18 gallon plastic storage bin
- 1 - 8" X 16" X 1 3/4" paving brick
- 10 - 30-egg sized egg cartons
- 1 - 16" X 25' Reflectix Insulation
- 1 - roll of aluminum foil tape
- 1 - roll of duct tape
- 4 - 4" long Zip Ties
- Felt marking pen
- Tape measure
- Pair of scissors
- Hand held electric drill
- 5/16" & 5/32" drill bit
- Jig saw
- Sand paper (to smooth any rough edges)

Quick Shelter Tips

Heating: Heating a shelter can prove to be a little more difficult than simply insulating the unit. If a source of electricity is available, you may consider a waterproof heating pad with chew resistant cord, or a porcelain light socket with a protective dome with a ceramic heating element - assuring enough overhead clearance to keep above the cat. It is important for the safety of the cat that the electricity source be a GFCI receptacle. If electricity is not available, microwaveable heating pads (such as Snuggle Safe brand) can be purchased and can provide 12 hours of warmth.

Insulating: Thought should be given to insulating a cat shelter. During the winter, cats become very vulnerable to the cold conditions. At the very least, straw (not hay) should be used and replaced every so often. Other options include polystyrene insulation, ShelterFoam or reflective insulation sheets such as mylar emergency blankets.

Watering: During the winter, problems arise from water freezing. Heated water bowls can be purchased if electricity is readily available. Other options include: Pet Solar Sippers or placing water bowls inside a styrofoam cooler (large enough to house the water bowl and a cat) and cutting a whole large enough for the cat to enter. Note that water and food should not be placed inside the cat's shelter. Water bowls can spill and food may attract unwanted predators. The feeding site should be a separate station.

Feeding: While cats need the higher protein supplied by canned cat food, during the winter months, wet food can freeze, so make sure there is also plenty of dry food. To prevent ants from infesting the dishes, place food bowls in a (plant) saucer of water or encircle the outside of the food bowl with petroleum jelly. Ideally, food and water would be placed under shelter. A clear plastic tub turned upside down, with cat sized square openings cut on each end, or a small children's umbrella staked in the ground are some options.