

## 10 Ways to Help Shelter Dogs

Think you don't have the time to help shelter dogs? Think again. There are tons of ways that you can help pups in need, and some take only minutes. Read these 10 ways to help shelter dogs and start making a difference today:

1. Put a donation box in your workplace. An empty box for donations can inspire others to help as well. Food, collars, toys, that fancy bed that your dog won't look twice at...all of them can be used by a pet in need. If your company allows, try spreading the word via email or a flyer. (Be sure to drop the donations off to a dog shelter as soon as possible and thank your coworkers when you're done.)
2. Collect old towels. Worn out towels and blankets are in high demand at shelters. Not only do they help make a cold, sterile cage more comforting, but they are easy to wash and replace for shelter staff.
3. Make some simple dog toys and donate them. The Internet is full of simple patterns for basic dog toys that pooches love. For under \$20 you can make enough toys to keep a number of dogs very happy.
4. Volunteer to play with the pooches. Yes, really! Socialization is a very important part of canine development. Many shelters lack adequate volunteers for cleaning and socializing, so it's worth contacting them to see if they have any volunteer slots free. Even once a month makes a difference.
5. Hold a dog toy drive. For your next party, consider asking guests to bring a small dog toy or other pet-related item for donation. The dogs will appreciate it, and it will make you feel better than traditional host or hostess gifts.
6. Foster. There is always a need to foster puppies or dogs. You can find out more details from your favorite local shelter.
7. Volunteer for a Trap-Neuter-Release program. These programs help reduce the feral dog population by humanely trapping stray dogs, neutering/spaying them, and releasing them to their original territory. By stopping the cycle of feral dog reproduction, you can do a world of good for dogs everywhere. Look for local TNR groups or animal welfare programs for more information.
8. Take photos for shelters. Got an eye behind the lens? Help homeless dogs by photographing them for adoption programs. Dogs who look happy and comfortable in their adoption photos are adopted much more quickly than ones who look scared or unfriendly...or who have no photo at all. See if your local shelter will let you take some Facebook-friendly photos for their use and help more dogs find their forever homes.
9. Put your change to work. At the end of every day, take all those spare pennies and nickels in your pockets and put them into a change jar. At the end of the month, cash it in at a change machine and donate to your favorite shelter. A few cents a day might not seem like much but every little bit helps.

10. Donate while you shop. Some programs such as Amazon Smile will donate a percentage of your purchase to the charity of your choice. If you do a lot of shopping online this is a great way to help shelter animals at the same time.

*Source: Pet Place.com Dog Lovers Newsletter November 3, 2014*