

At the Rosamond Gifford Zoo our Animal Care Team knows how important it is to give our animals enrichment. But what is enrichment and why is it so important for animals? Can it be helpful for your animals at home too? Well, enrichment is an opportunity for animals to practice and express natural behaviors they would normally do in the wild. There are five types of enrichment: sensory (smells, new textures, sounds), cognitive (toys, puzzles), social (interactions with others), physical (new bed, substrate) and food (frozen treats, slow feeders). And yes, you can do this for your animals at home too!

MAKE YOUR OWN SNUFFLE MAT:

Snuffle Mats are a type of cognitive and food enrichment. These mats challenge your pet's ability to use their natural behaviors to find food rewards. While there are many snuffle mats you can purchase, see if you can do some enrichment for yourself and exercise your mental and physical abilities by making your own snuffle mat for your pet!

HOW TO ASSEMBLE:



1. Cut your fleece fabric into 7-inch by 1-inch strips.



2. You will need as many strips as there are holes in your mat or sink protector grid.



3. Tie fleece fabric through the holes in the grid. Start by tying in rows across the top of your mat, stringing one side of the fleece through one hole and the other side through the next hole and tying the two ends together.



4. After you finish all the rows start tying in the other direction, up and down.



5. When you are finished, it should look like many vertical and horizontal lines on the back of your mat.



Note: It may be easier to weave the fabric through the grid/mat by flipping it upside down, then flipping back over to tie the two ends of the fabric strip together.

MAKE YOUR OWN ENRICHMENT AT HOME!



WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 plastic sink protector grid or 1 rub anti-fatigue mat with holes in it
- Fleece fabric, the more colors the better
- Scissors
- Your pet's favorite treat!

After the mat/grid is covered with fleece it is time for your pet to have a turn using their new enrichment toy!

Add some of their favorite treats, ruffle them around into the snuffle mat, and let your pet use their nose to dig around and find some treats!



TURN MEALTIME INTO ENRICHMENT!

Don't want to make a snuffle mat or maybe you don't have the materials at home? That is okay because you can turn a simple mealtime into an enrichment for your pet. All you need is your pet's food, their food bowl, and some water!

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Your pet's food
- A freezer safe pet food bowl
- Water

HOW TO ASSEMBLE:

1. Add your pet's food to a freezer safe pet food bowl.
2. Add enough water into the bowl to cover most of your pet's food but allow some food to stick out above the water.
3. Put the bowl in the freezer and allow to freeze, time will vary depending on the amount of water and the size of the bowl.
4. Take out of the freezer and serve to your pet! This will help them slow their feeding down if your pet is a fast eater and it gives all pets a fun way to problem-solve, while enjoying a tasty reward.

