



Winter "Tips" Survival Guide

For Cats outdoors

Colony Shelters- Cover and Camouflage

This is a DIY idea to help weather-proof styrofoam cat shelters using a pallet, tarp, straw, garden stakes & cable ties. The photos show a building progression to give an idea of the setup.

Bricks are used along edges to help secure the tarp. The shelters are located along an alley under a dense thicket of bush honeysuckle. It's fairly well concealed. For extra camouflage, add branches & leaves over the tarp to better camouflage it from view.

Thrifty Suggestions:

Pallets you can usually find for free or very low cost on NextDoor or Marketplace.

You can get tarps at dollar stores.

You can also use old tents and stakes. Check Goodwill and other thrift stores. Cats don't need fancy, they just need safety. This setup is ideal and can be used year round.





Foam Shelters

- Place paving bricks or other heavy items on top of your foam shelters to keep the wind from blowing them away.
- Face your shelter openings south. This prevents the north westerly winds of winter from blowing right in the opening.
- Cover your foam shelters in black garbage bags. Black retains heat from the sun and can help keep cats warm.
- Place shelters off the cold ground. Use 2x4s or pallets to keep shelters off the floor.
- Use duct tape to secure lids and prevent air flow.

Storage Tote Shelters

- You can make safe and warm shelters out of two sterilite totes.
- Alley Cat Allies has a great tutorial on [how to make a sterilite shelter](#).
- You can also use this method with a small foam cooler placed inside a tote with extra insulation.
- You can paint or cover your tote to match its surroundings.
- Place shelters off the cold ground. Use 2x4s or pallets to keep shelters off the floor.
- Use duct tape to secure lids and prevent air flow or water leaks.
- For more ideas, [Click Here](#) for the Best Friends Animal Society for more caregiver tips.



<https://www.alleycat.org/resources/how-to-build-an-outdoor-shelter/>



See arrow pointing to sterilite shelter covered to blend in.

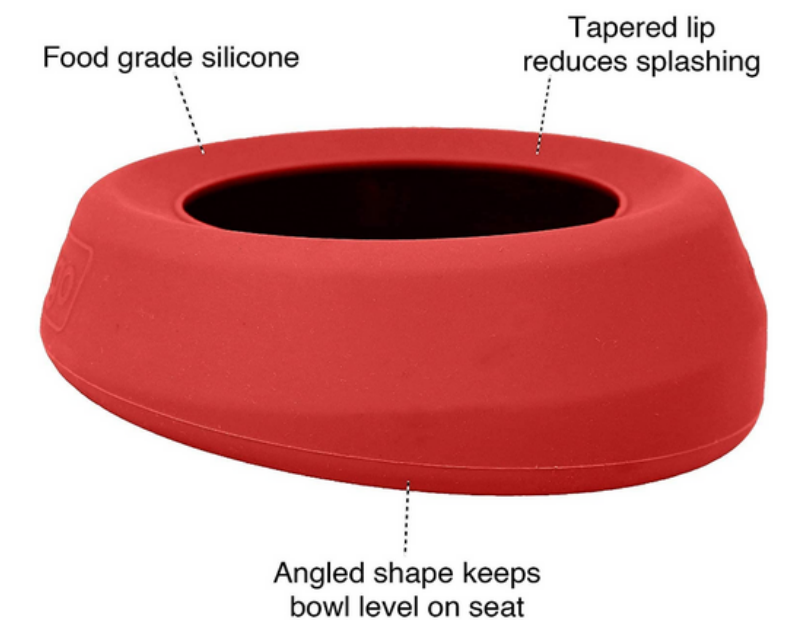
Feeding Stations

- Feeding stations are pretty universal.
- You can use a sterilite tub with a hole cut with easy access.
- Take an old nightstand and pull out the drawer. A little dark paint (Dark colors absorb more heat) and add some roofing shingles, and you have a great feeding station.
- You can do the same with a short dresser. This is great for mutiple cats. It is also handy to have one level for water and one for food.
- [One of our favorite feeding stations made to order can be found HERE](#) (Pictured below. It is only \$29.95



Prevent the Freeze

- Slice the top off an old tire. Fill the tire with rocks. Find a silicone or plastic bowl (Black retains heat). When you place the top back on. The tire absorbs the sun's heat and warms the rocks. This keeps the water from freezing
- Use a couple of ping pong balls in the water. This keeps the water's surface moving
- Add sugar (just a couple of teaspoons) to the water each morning and afternoon. This will help with freezing water and gives the kitties extra calories which help keep their energy strong
- Silicone Bowls are fantastic. If water does freeze, you can pop the ice out and refill on site
- Keep water out of the wind. You can use a smaller cooler with insulation and the side cut open
- Deep and dark colored bowls are preferable to wide and shallow. The deeper the dish, the longer it takes water to freeze
- Use styrofoam bowls which act as an insulator. It is a great excuse to order that new dish at your favorite take out place



One of our favorite silicone bowls. Helps keep wind off the water, deep and inexpensive



Feeding in Winter

- Cats require extra calories in the winter. In order to keep the extra fat layers cats need to stay warm in the cold
- Feed twice a day. Once in the morning on your way to work. Once on your way home
- Add water to wet food. The biggest threat to cats in frigid temps is dehydration. Use tips from the previous section to help them access water.
- Warm wet food in the mornings. We like to mix food with water, microwave on reheat. This will avoid scorching and food will be warm and ready for hungry kitties to devour
- Feed dry kitten food in the winter. Dry food will last longer in cold temps. Kitten food has more calories than adult food.
- Do not mix wet with dry. Food will freeze into clumps that are not edible. Leave the dry food separate and available at all times
- Use warming mats under the food bowls to prevent freezing