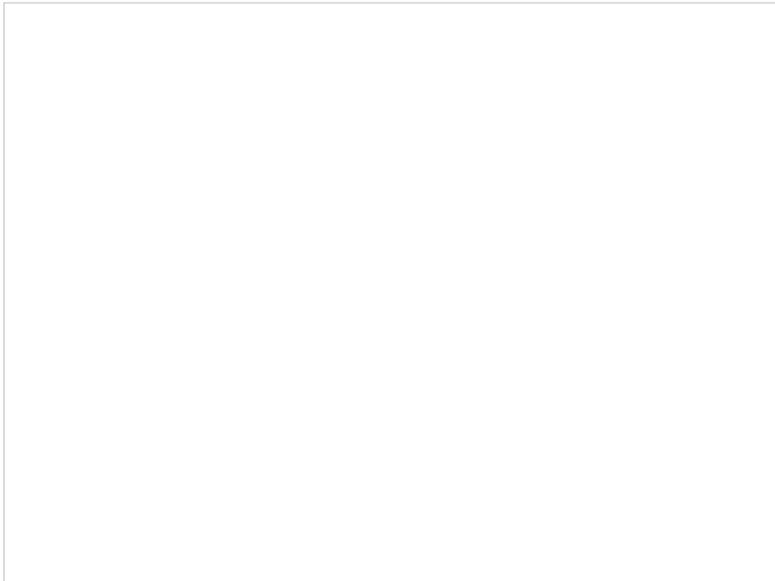


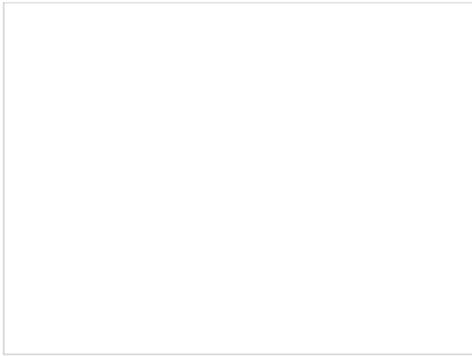
Building an elevated bed for use in shelter cat housing

Building elevated cat beds is a fun and inexpensive way to create an enriched cage environment and prevent disease. This information sheet will show you how.



Providing cats with choice in their housing environment is important for their health and well-being. Elevated cat beds enrich cage environments by providing a perch, a place to hide (underneath, with draped towel), and for more frightened cats the food can go behind the towel-covered area for a darkened place to eat (some cats prefer this). The elevated bed does all this and conserves precious cage floor space - so the cat can move about.

2' x 2' cages are too small to house a cat beyond a few hours, yet they are commonly used for cat housing in many facilities. While many shelters are planning to remodel their current housing or purchase new cat housing structures, many of these small cages will be in use for a while longer. There are several things that can be done very quickly and with little cost that will improve the quality of life for the cats housed in these cages and most of these ideas can continue to be used even after improvements in cat housing have been made.



Towel is pulled up to show the area under the bed that can be used for hiding when a towel is down. The use of this type of bed opens up the floor space while meeting more of the cat's needs and providing them with choice in the housing environment.

Cat in traditional cage



This cat is given nearly the same choices in its housing environment - litter box, food/water, place to hide and a place to perch (on top of feral box), however this cat is severely confined in this set up and cannot lie on its side nor move more than a single step.

These cages are the same size. Both provide the cat with similar choices in the cage but there is a dramatic difference in the amount of floor space and general space available in the cage with the elevated bed.

Making the PVC bed:

This raised cat bed is made of 1" PVC pipe and provides a bed, an elevated perch, a place to hide (by draping a towel over the bed to the floor of the cage) and increases the usable space in the cage for the cat. These take about an hour to make and currently cost about \$20.00 in materials to build. The finished product measures approximately 20" long, 14" deep and 14" high. It will fit into a standard 2' x 2' or larger cage. Measure the inside dimensions of your cage to insure the bed will fit. Adjustments can easily be made by changing the dimensions of your bed to fit the size cage you have. Maximize the length of the bed when you can and try not to make it much skinnier as cats need space to lie comfortably.

One inch PVC pipe is easy to work with and quite durable. This fabric can be washed between cat use and the PVC can either be wiped down or run through a commercial type dishwasher. We have also seen shelters simply power wash the entire bed (the PVC pipes in those beds have been glued together).

Alternatively Kuranda makes similar cat beds available for purchase, <https://kuranda.com/cat-products/cat-bed>.

Materials:

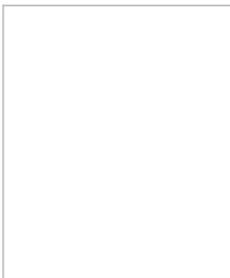
- Four - 3 way PVC fittings.
 - These are hard to find locally usually but can be ordered online. Look for furniture grade PVC fittings - they are less expensive and very durable. The price should be less than \$2.00 each - here is an example: <https://www.greenhousemegastore.com/hardware-diy/pvc-fittings/pvc->

[fitting-lb-3-way-connector](#)

- One - 8', 1" white PVC
 - Cut to the following lengths:
 - 2 - 11 ½ "
 - 4 - 12 ½ "
 - 2 - 17 ½ "



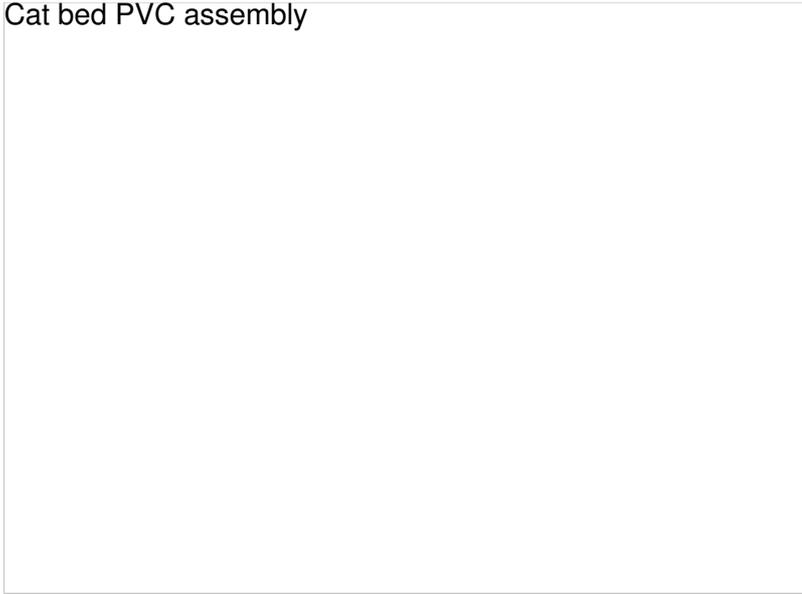
- Glue
 - Either regular fast set PVC pipe glue or slow set pipe glue can be used to build the bed.
 - I prefer the slow set pictured here as it gives you just a little more time (not much though) to make adjustments and its white in color so more forgiving when messy – it is expensive however



Assembly of bed frame:

1. **Attaching the legs.** Glue the 12 1/2" legs into place - one into each of the four 3-way connectors
2. **Making the ends.** Complete each end of the bed by gluing the 11 ½" pipe in between two legs. Make sure the legs are evenly aligned- do this by laying on a flat surface.

Cat bed PVC assembly



3. **Assemble bed.** Once the bed ends are complete no more gluing is needed. Simply assemble the bed by placing the 17 ½" PVC pipes into one end of the bed, slip on bed fabric and then place the other end of the bed into place, and snap the fabric ends. It is nice to be able to disassemble the frame for cleaning needs (fits nicely in a commercial dishwasher) and more compact for storage when not in use.

4. It is recommended to use 1" pipe end caps glued to each leg to fully enclose legs. (caps are not pictured here)

5. After completion check to make sure it fits into your cage before you make a bunch more - if it's a tight fit, take a little (1/4" or so) off each of the 17 ½" PVC pieces until the bed fits.

Making the bed:

While making a visit to the UF Shelter Med Program and making elevated cat beds for their local shelter we discovered a great alternative to the original Cordura fabric bed - a vinyl coated fabric bed. It's great because:

1. For you non-sewers, there's no sewing involved (nor dealing with snaps) so it is easy to make.
2. It can be cleaned by wiping it down - at the same time the cage is cleaned - using the same disinfectant. Or if your commercial dishwasher is big enough - it could just go through a wash cycle.

Vinyl coated fabric model bed (recommended bed material for use in shelters due to ease of cleaning)

Use the same PVC frame assembly as described above - some folks like to glue the bed entirely together- however this is not necessary. (Note: beware of making wobbly beds when bed parts are fully glued)

1 . Order vinyl glue: H66 vinyl glue

(http://www.rochfordsupply.com/product_listing.asp_Q_ProdID_E_3262_A_SubC...)

or other similar type.

2. Order vinyl: 18oz vinyl coated fabric

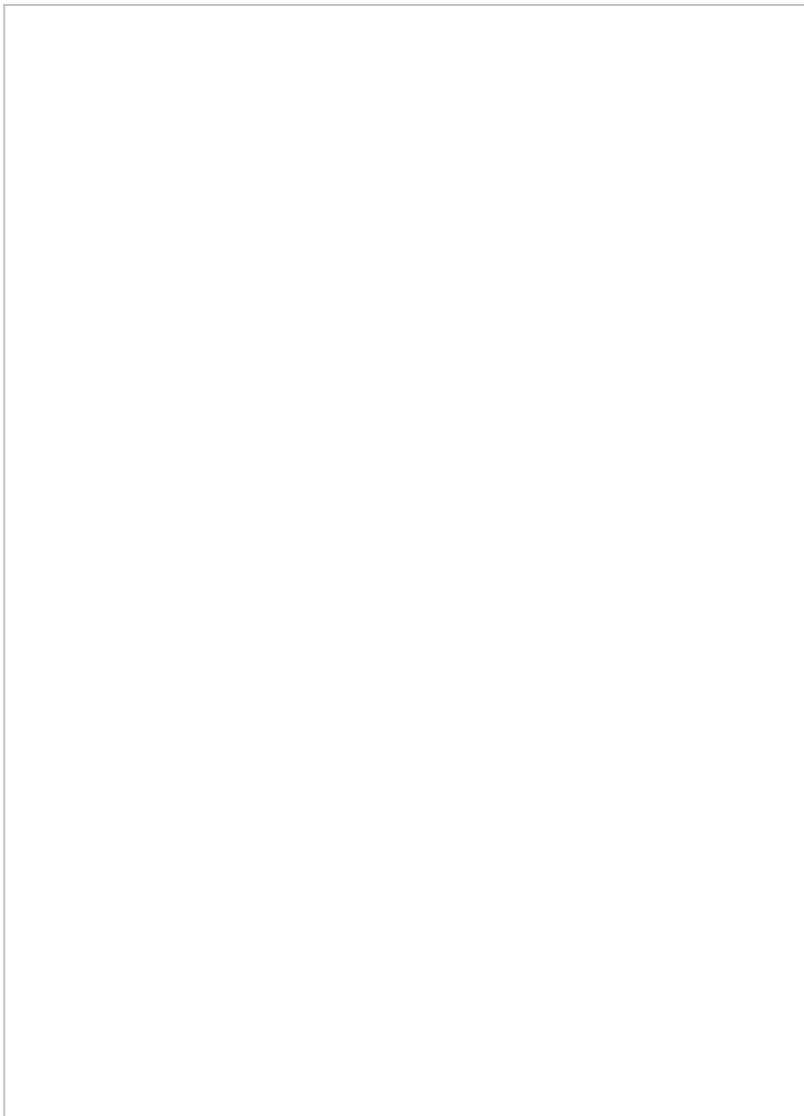
(http://www.rochfordsupply.com/shop/Textiles/Vinyl_%28Boat_Tops_and_Tarps...)

or similar.

- 1 yard will make 2 beds.

3. Make template for the bed out of cardboard.

- These dimensions fit the PVC frame described above.
- Adjust accordingly if changes have been made with the frame dimensions.
- Recommend making template, cut one bed and attach to PVC frame to make sure it fits, after fit is confirmed - cut more.

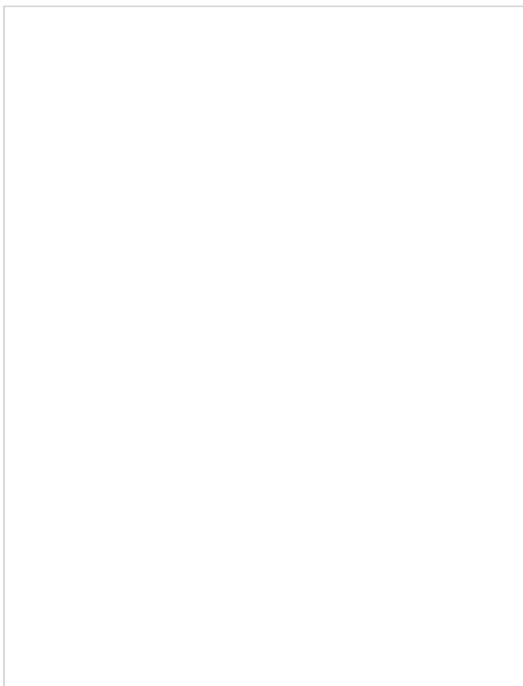


4. Use this template to trace pattern onto vinyl fabric:



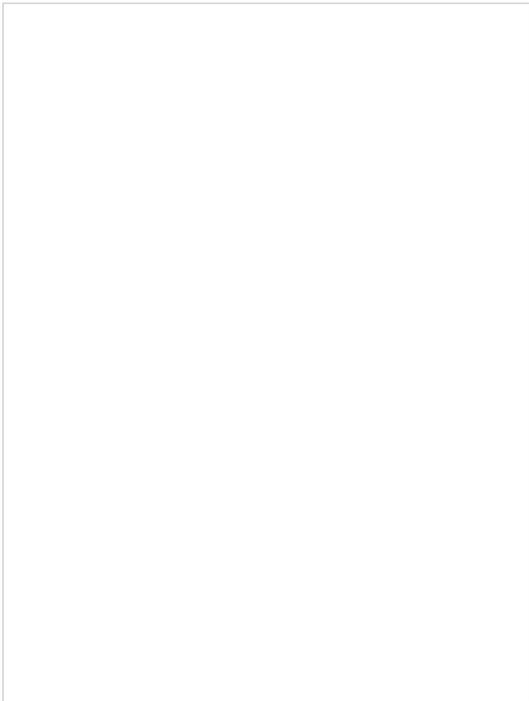
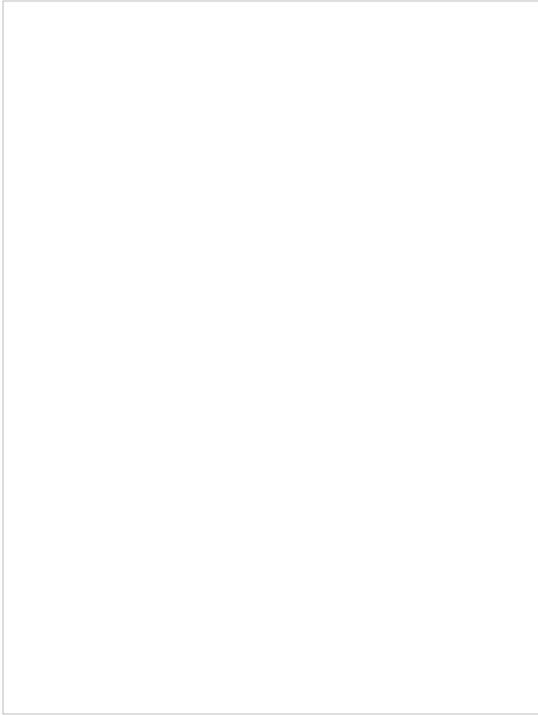
5. Cut out bed (heavy duty scissors/shears recommended). Mark where the folded sides should be glued at (on the vinyl fabric on the side that will be the bottom of the bed). On the long side this will be at ~7.25" from the edge and on the ends this will be at ~8.75" from the end.

6. Place PVC frame upside down onto vinyl bed.

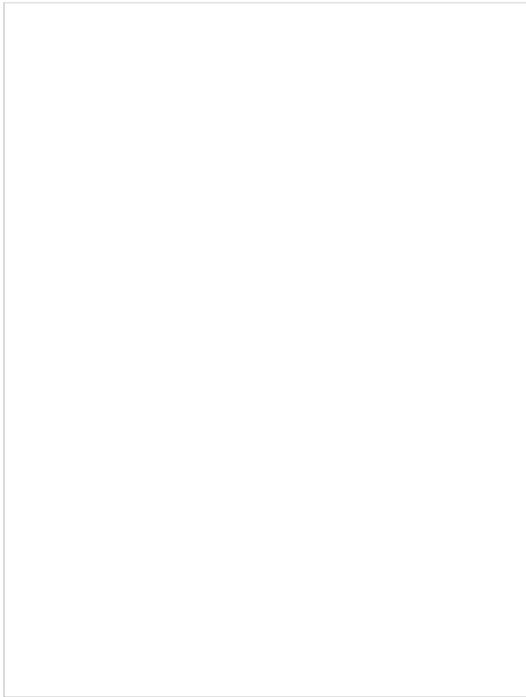


7. Place glue in both locations - along the edge of the piece to be folded over and at the location where it will be folded to. (Careful not to get glue on PVC pipe). Glue takes about 60 seconds to begin to grab hold. Monitor position of glued piece and continue to hold in place. Best to do one side at a time. After about 1-2 minutes glue will hold on its own and next side can be done. When fully glued check all previous glued sides - place a little pressure on the glued area to insure

pieces are sticking together then set bed aside until glue has fully cured.



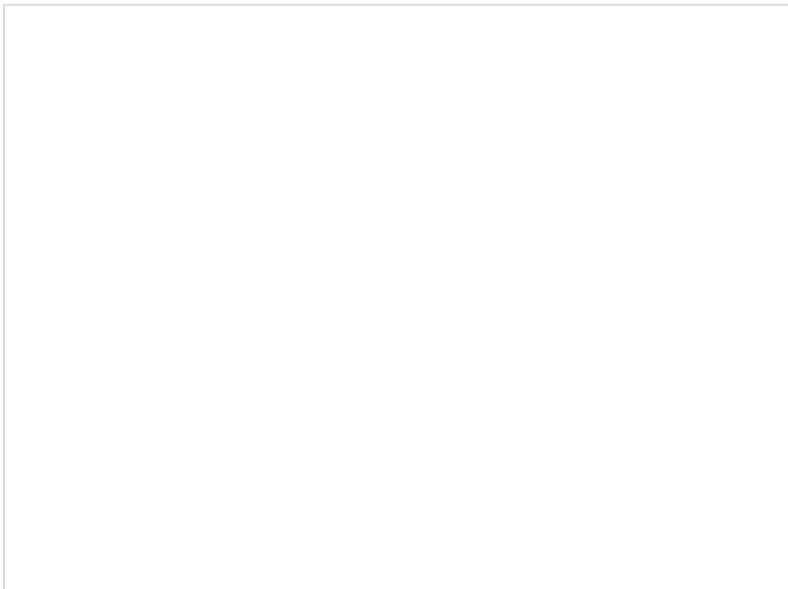
8. Bed is complete - (this stubby legged bed is for a dimensionally challenged cage)



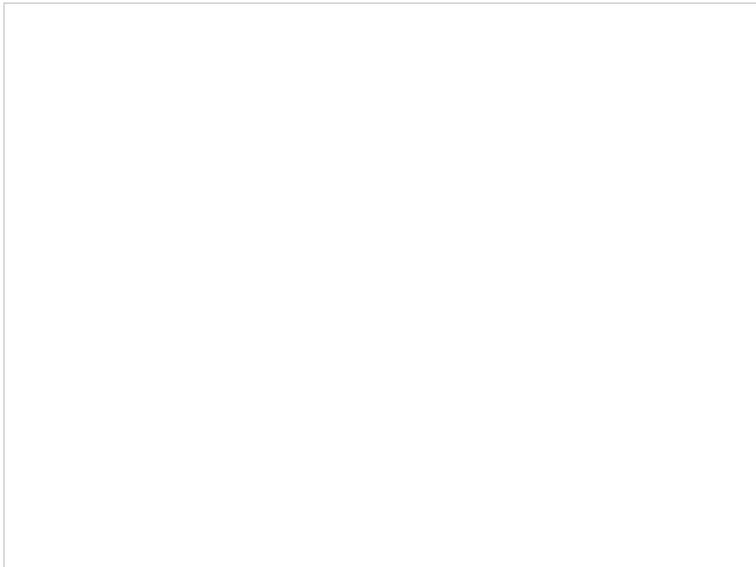
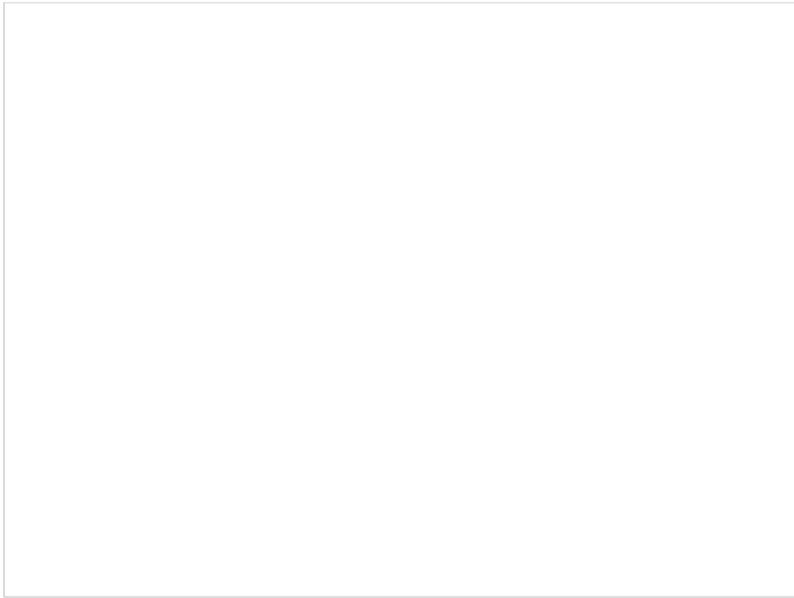
Vinyl fabric raised bed in use at Alachua County Animal Services, FL - Go Gators!

Fabric model elevated bed

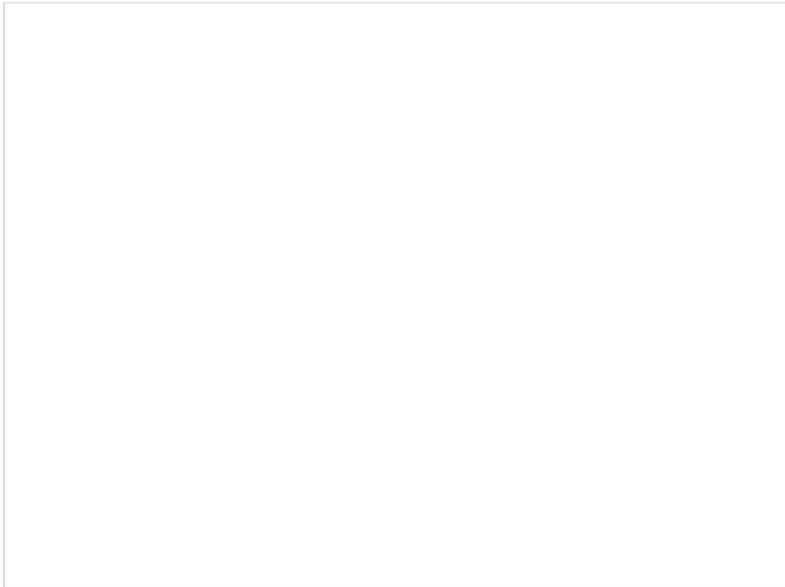
1. **Cut a rectangle.** Cut a 30" x 23" rectangular piece of fabric (recommend durable heavy weight canvas, such as cordura, although recycled clothing, denims etc. can work just as well.) The blue material shown is recycled material that has been sewn together.



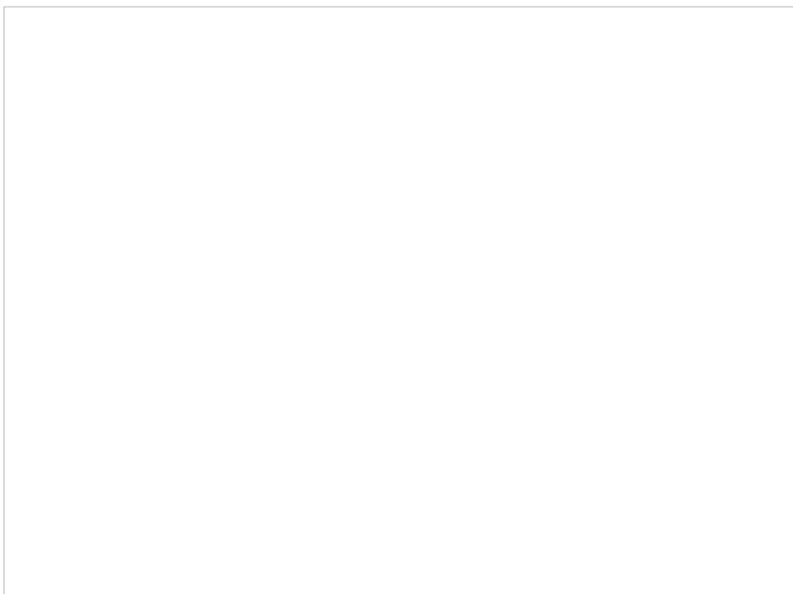
2. . Remove a 6 ³/₄ " square of fabric from each corner of the fabric rectangle. Round the inner corner if desired.



3. **Snap squares.** Take one 7" square and cut it into 4 smaller squares of equal size. Zig- zag sew or use a serger around each small square.

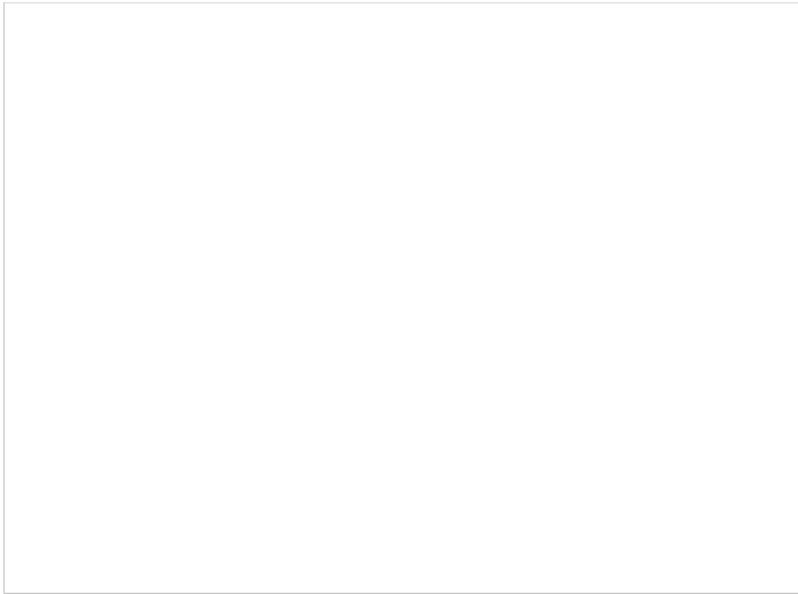


4. Trim excess fabric. Tip the 4 corners on the longest part of the fabric bed.



5. **Protect fabric from fraying.** Zig- zag sew twice or use a serger around the perimeter of the bed.

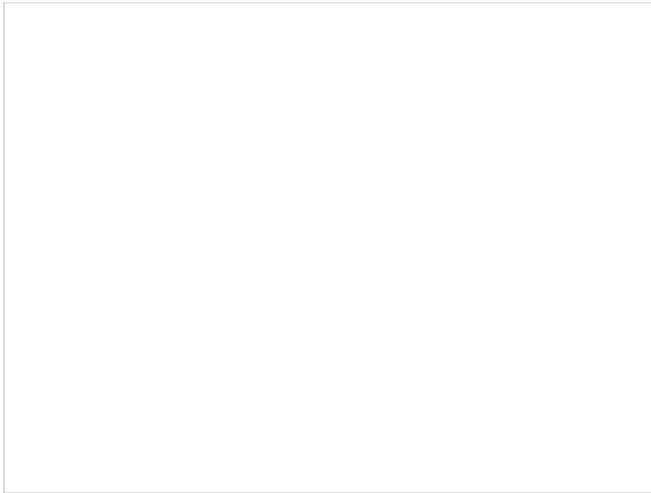
6. **Mark where the snaps will go.** Fold the bed in half along the long axis. Open it again by unfolding and place an x on the midline at 1" from each end and at 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ " from each end. (This is where the snaps will be placed.)



7. Making the side sleeves. Fold the sides of the bed inward until the leading edge reaches the $6\frac{3}{4}$ " cutout line. Pin and sew $\frac{1}{4}$ " from leading edge. Over-sew one more time. Do this for both sides. These sleeves will slide onto the $17\frac{1}{2}$ " PVC pipes.

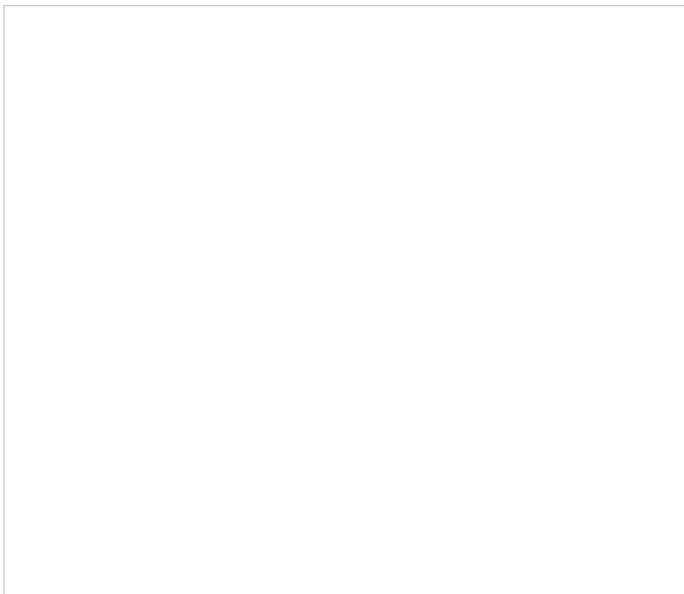


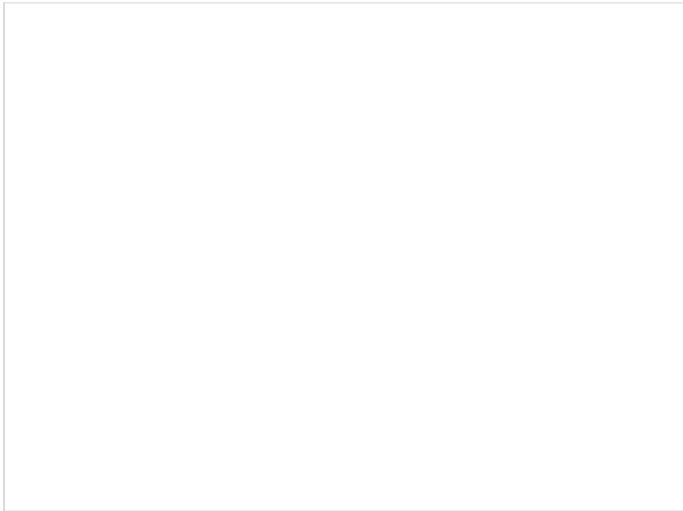
8. Make snaps. Using the small squares – attach $\frac{1}{2}$ of a snap set to each square. Follow directions for making snaps according to the snap set instructions.



9. **Place snaps.** Once snaps have been sewn onto small square place the male snap at the $6\frac{3}{4}$ " mark and the female snap at the 1" mark on each end of the bed. Stitch around the square - double stitch where needed.

10. **Complete.** Slip $17\frac{1}{2}$ " PVC pipe into sleeves. Attach bed ends to pipe. Snap fabric onto bed at each end.





Ideally there would be a pass through portal to another cage where the litter box can be placed. Please see our information sheets on [Manufactured Portals](#) and [Making Double Compartment Cat Cages using a PVC Portal](#). The food and water can be attached either to the front of this cage or for fearful cats - behind the draped towel - as it is darker behind there and cats that are not eating may prefer eating in a darker, hidden area.