

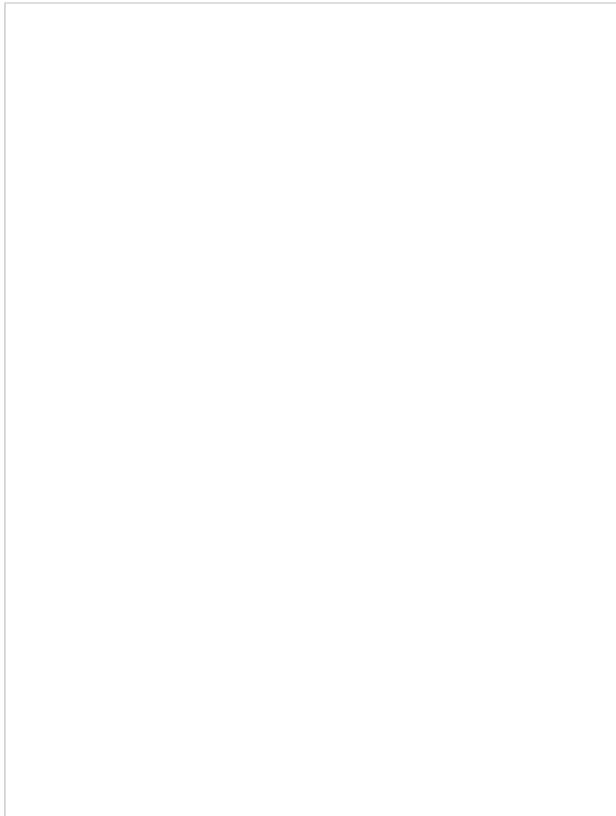
# Sit, Stay, Retreat! Enrichment Ideas for Dog Housing in Shelters

Looking for ways to physically enrich your dog housing? Providing dogs with a place for retreat allows dogs to express normal behavior and increases the choices the dog has within their environment.

Animals can more easily adjust to their new environment when we provide them some opportunity to choose: indoors, outdoors, in a bed, on the floor, on an elevated space, behind a wall, chewing on toys, snuggling under blankets, cooling off lying in full stretch on the floor, curling into a ball on the bed, ability to walk around, etc.

A place for retreat is something most people think of for cat housing in animal shelters but it is also an important enrichment to provide for dogs. A place to retreat can be provided in a number of ways.

One that is essentially built into the kennel design is when dogs are housed in back to back kennels separated with guillotine doors.



*This is an older double sided indoor/outdoor kennel with guillotine door.*

*Notice the wall space on either side of the door. The dog can use that for a place for retreat. This could be improved by offsetting the guillotine door to one side of the wall, which would provide a larger retreat area.*

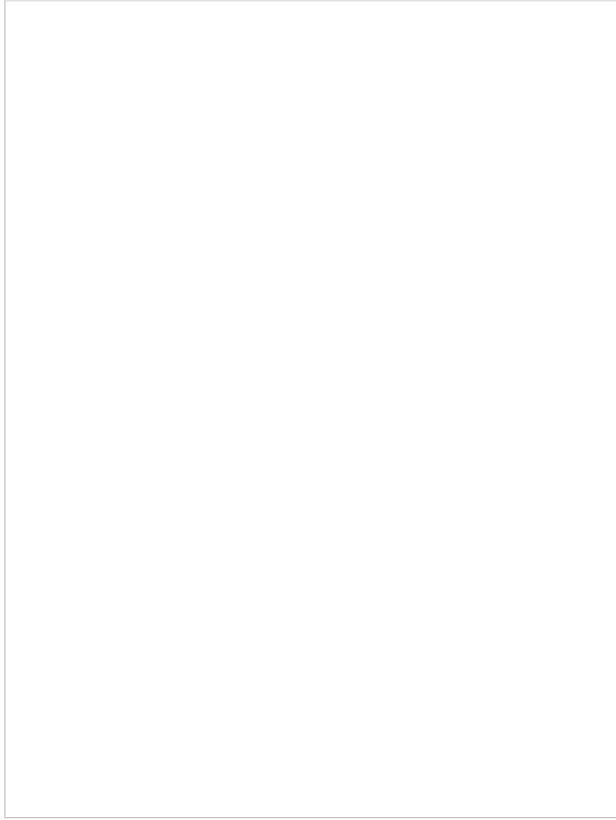
The wall space around the guillotine door provides a place the dog can go (behind) should they want to get away from something on the other side – e.g. a barking dog, a scary noise, or that funny looking snake that spews water(the hose!). It is important to note that double sided kennels with guillotine doors that encompass the entire wall space do not provide for this built-in place of retreat. Ideally the guillotine door would encompass only a portion of the wall and would be offset to one side so that the remainder of the wall could be used by the dog for retreat.

Not all dogs have access to double-sided kennels. We wish more did, however there are other ways to provide dogs with a place for retreat. High sided beds and boxes are very effective.

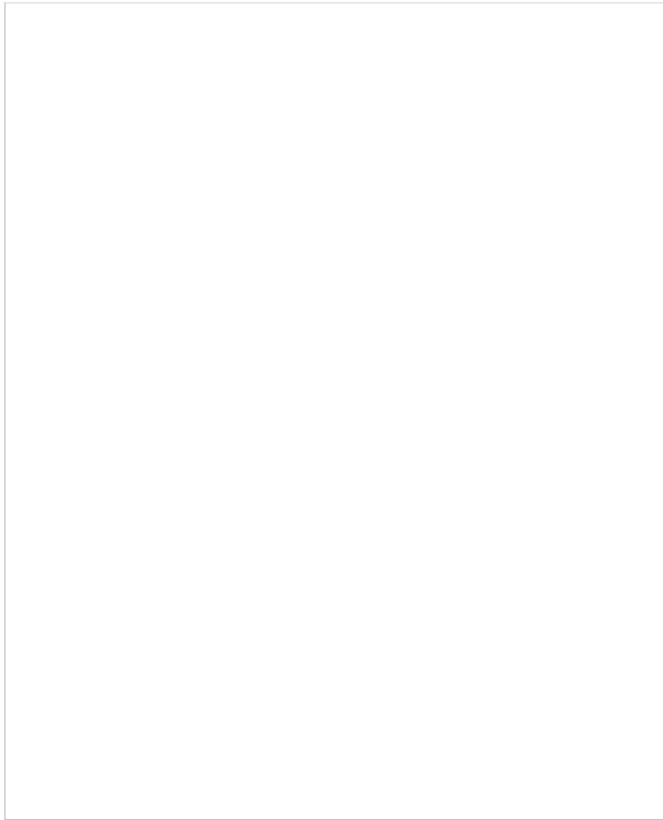
*Note: Anything added to the housing environment should be monitored for chewing/damage and be replaced as needed.*

We like some of the plastic recycle boxes/bin because they are durable and readily available ... but any higher sided fairly durable box could be used.

Cutting out a place for entry allows easy access for the dog and the high sides allow the dog to hunker down if they so choose. These high sided boxes have some additional benefits and can help provide a cozy space when additional bedding is added and can protect a dog from sometimes drafty kennels.



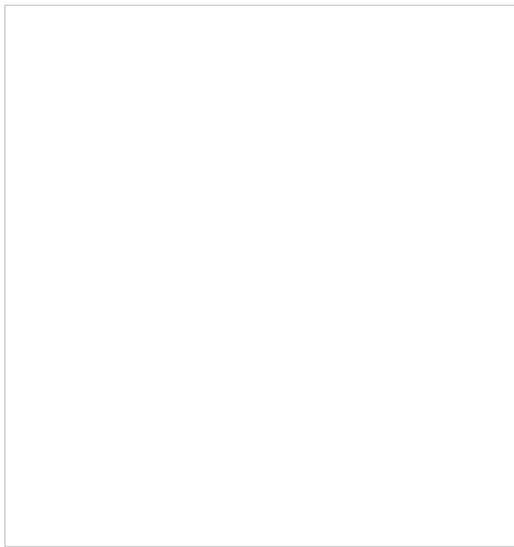
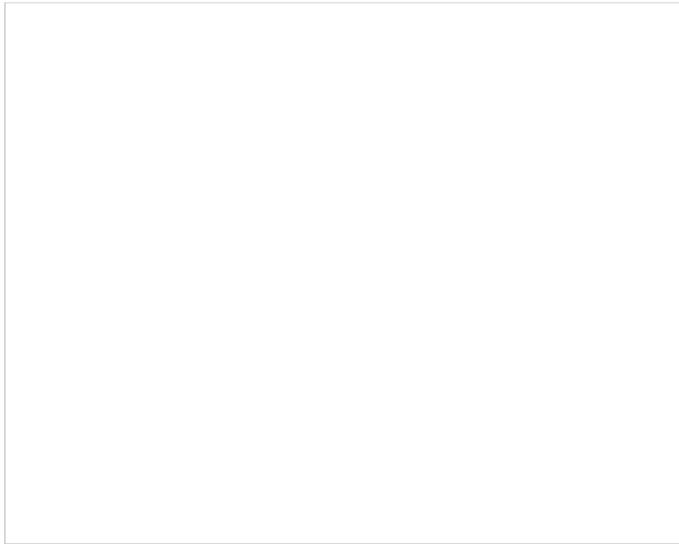
*This is an older chihuahua that has welcomed a high-sided box where he can get away from it all and snuggle into his bed.*



*This is a 22- gallon storage seat /deck box that has been converted into a place for retreat for a small dog. These are nice as they are also a seat. A person could enter the kennel and sit with the dog without having to sit on the floor. Many dogs also show a liking to get up on top of these too.*



*A simple carrier can provide a place for retreat as well.*



*High sided plastic beds do not have tall walls like the recycle bins, but they do provide about 12" of wall height and a place for dogs to get down into should they choose. They are also great for keeping bedding inside the bed and off the floor!*