

EGG CARTON TOY

The wonderful toy pictured right is the inspiration for this Egg Carton Toy making pamphlet. Laura Lewis made it at a toy making party hosted by Minnesota Companion Bird Association. It is made from the drink cup holders you get at fast food and coffee shops, with straws, beads, puzzle pieces and more. I describe this toy in a post on my blog, <http://parrotenrichment.com/blog/>. The post is dated April 7, 2012 or you can search Egg Carton Toy.

I had lots of egg cartons at home and thought I could make a similar toy. I purchased drinking straws, large puzzle pieces and shredded paper from the dollar store. To fill the egg cartons I use items in my toy supply, vine balls, foot toys, etc. Or birdie bread.





Cut two lengths of rope, leather, sisal, hemp or what you use for your toy making projects. You want each piece of rope long enough to string on straws or pasta shapes and fit through the egg carton—so about 14 inches would be a good start.

Tie a loop at the end of each piece and wrap a piece of masking tape at the other end. The masking tape end will make it easier to thread through puzzle pieces, toys and egg carton.

Cut your straws into pieces about 1 to 1 1/4 inch lengths. String on a couple straw pieces. You can insert beads in between the straw pieces if you like.



If you have a parrot who you think might ingest plastic pieces you can substitute pasta shapes for the straws and beads





Next string on a puzzle piece. You can punch a hole in the piece using the tips of your scissor.

Thread that through a hole in the top of the egg carton.

You will notice we are using a half egg carton here. This works well for smaller parrots. For larger ones use the whole carton or the 18 egg size carton.



Next, punch a hole in the bottom of the carton, opposite the hole where you started at the top.



Now you want to thread something on that will fit inside the closed carton. For the toy we are making here, we are going to use a bird bread muffin that we baked with a hole in the middle and a vine ball. The recipe for the bird bread muffin can be found at <http://parrotenrichment.com/nutrition/recipes.html>

You could use a cut down paper cup, one of those ice cream waffle cups, whatever you can think of.

Continue threading through the egg carton.

Leave the thread hanging on the bottom as you will be threading more straws and puzzle pieces on after you are finished stuffing the inside of the carton.



My birds like vine balls, so that is next. You will want to thread your rope through the vine ball before you stuff it.



After you get your rope through, you can stuff a little bit of paper in the vine ball, then a treat, then more paper.

Once you stuff the vine ball, thread through the bottom of the carton as you did previously.



Once you get your egg carton filled as you want it, you can start stuffing paper inside.

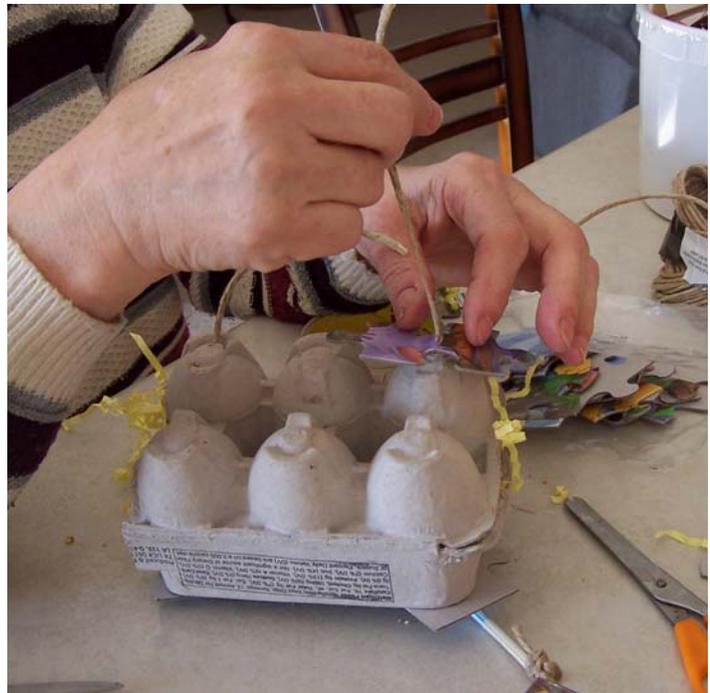
Here you see the carton we are making is filled with the vine ball and bird bread muffin. Again, you can use other items you have in your toy part supply at home.

If you like, you can put in a few loose foot toys.



Now stuff the inside of the carton with shredded paper. You will be stuffing the paper around the strung items and any loose toys or treats you put in the carton.

Turn the carton over and string on another puzzle piece to help secure the bottom and top together. To do this you tie a knot in the rope close to the puzzle piece you just strung on.



Add more straw and beads to the ends of the rope.



Or use pasta shapes as previously suggested. Here we strung on spinach penne pasta pieces.

Done. A great toy from recycled egg cartons and a few items purchased at the dollar store.

Thanks to my Mom, Ardis, for helping with this toy making demonstration so I could take the photos.



Note: Don't throw the puzzle box away. You can cut up the box and use it just like the puzzle pieces. Here you see Zorba is just as attracted to a piece of cut up puzzle box as the actual puzzle piece. This is a trick Mom taught me.